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DULCE COR

*FORD BERÊTON*

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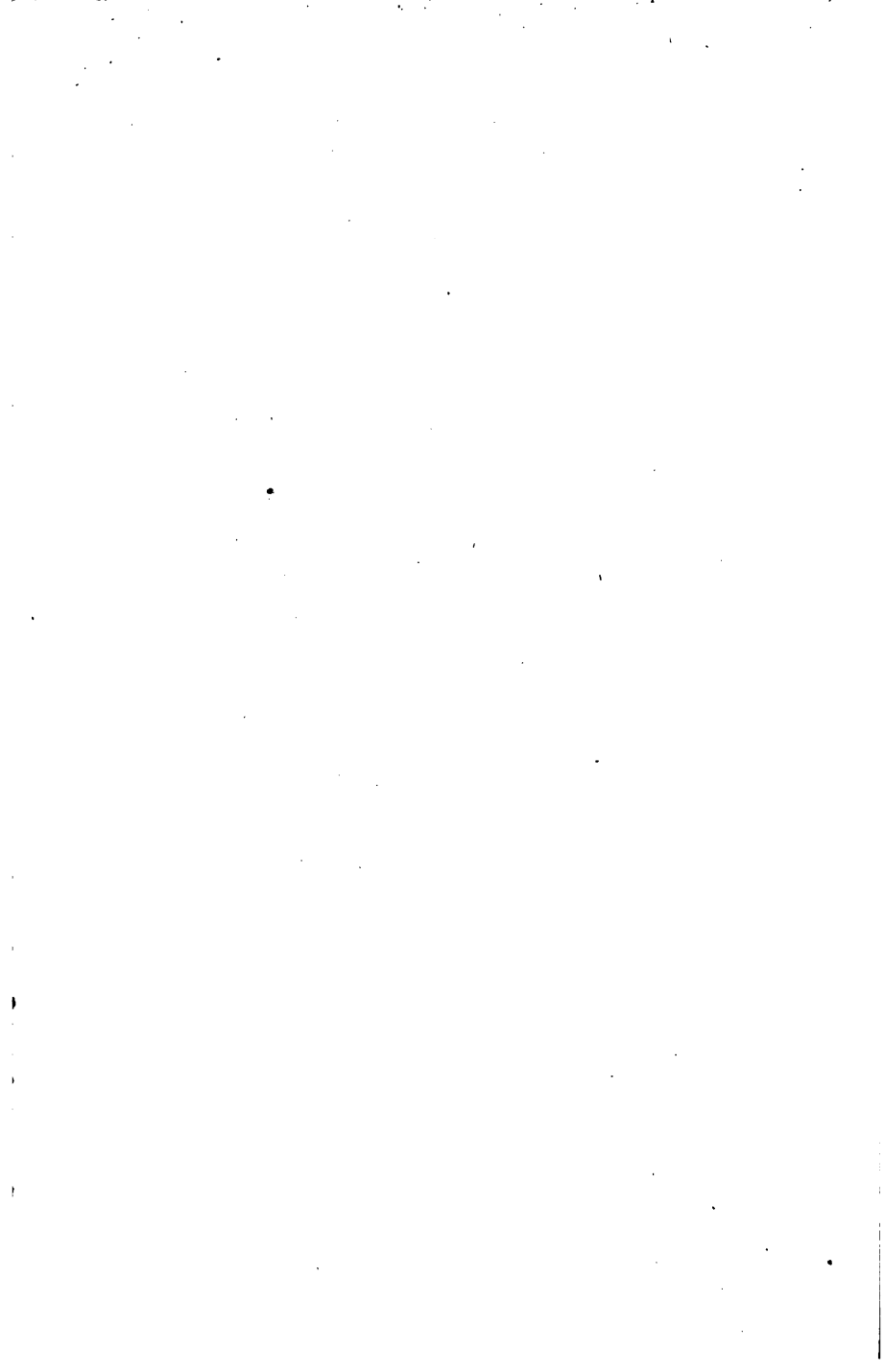


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DULCE COR







"THE LADY BEATRICE"





# DULCE COR

BEING

## THE POEMS OF FORD BERÊTON

"My youth's dear book"

VITA NUOVA

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

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*To you, my heart's Sweet Heart,  
Ideal still to me,  
My life's far better part—  
To you, O wife to be,*

*Wherever thou mayst wait,  
By what dear trysting-gate,  
Thy feet all wet with dew,  
Thy youth's dear dew—*

*Dear Muse, so often sought,  
Tender and wise and true,  
I dedicate anew  
My 'youth's dear book' to you,*

*Howe'er imperfect wrought  
Its Pansies of pure thought,  
With Rosemary for remembrance,  
And Rue, sweet Rue, for you.*



## FOREWORD.

IN the ancient Abbey of *Dulce Cor*,  
The pleasant Solway near,  
Two passionate hearts they laid of yore  
And a love that cast out fear.

And still love casts out fear,  
And hearts like the passionate hearts of yore  
Throb in the Abbey of *Dulce Cor*,  
The pleasant Solway near.

SWEET HEART ABBEY,  
1885.

“When John Baliol died in 1269 Devorgilla, his wife, had his dear heart embalmed and enshrined in a coffer of ivory, enamelled and bound with silver bright, which was placed before her daily in her hall as her sweet silent companion. At her death she desired the relic to be laid upon her heart, when sleeping in the New Abbey which she caused to be built. Hence it received the name of Sweet Heart Abbey.”—*Scoti Monasticon*.



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9

## MEMORY HARVEST.

R. M. M.

I.

ANOTHER year it is ! The full spring tide  
Throbs in the heart of nature and of man.  
It sweeps the drift of other years than these—  
The spoil of summer, wrack of winter wan,  
Flotsam and jetsam of all memories,  
Far up the shingly side  
Of that long barrier-reef we call our Past,  
Which groweth hungrier with the ebbing years,  
Burying far down high hopes and bitter fears,  
Leaving naught bare for long the seas upcast !

II.

Shall we then make our harvest of the sea  
And garner memories, which we surely deem  
May light these hearts of ours on darksome days,  
When loneliness hath power, and no kind beam  
Lightens about our feet the perilous ways ?  
For of Eternity

u'

B

This present hour is all we call our own,  
And Memory's edge is dull'd, even as it brings  
The sunny swathes of unforgotten springs,  
And sweeps them to our feet like grass long mown.

## III.

From out the dark one gloaming shineth bright,  
When in Fate's door Love placed his golden key—  
A dull December day with spurts of hail,  
And fine frost garniture on bush and tree.  
O'er a white land had raved the southern mail,  
And now through early night  
The city lights flash past, and all my youth  
Stirs in my heart to greet one in the hall—  
A grey-eyed maid, as comely, sweet, and tall,  
As in Judean fields the gleaner Ruth.

## IV.

There is an eve in the sweet prime of June  
Agleam with Love's fierce light, a twilight sky  
Shot through with arrows of a man's despair—  
Grey seas' monotony, low mists that lie  
Along the tideless flats, a lonely pair  
In that intense commune  
Which blots the future and the past, which makes  
The passers-by seem idle phantom shapes ;  
Till, born in fire and dark, twin Love escapes,  
And in their eyes June's sweetest morning breaks.

V.

A day of sunny showers, filled with the scent  
 Of leaves, sun-smitten ere the dews were dry ;  
 The path, one dazzling glow of hawthorn bloom,  
 And underfoot were daisies, and the shy  
 Red roses beckoning from the woodland gloom ;  
 The graceful foxgloves bent  
 To cool their ladyfingers in the rills ;  
 Yet through the gladness in the eyes of each  
 We read, that perfect joy hath power to teach  
 Even sadder things than plenitude of ills.

VI.

Another eve I cannot choose but name,  
 Nor fail to tell of reunited hands  
 Warm after severance—of eyes that scarce  
 Left hold of eyes—the wonderful new lands,  
 The purple plain of sea, the gentle airs  
 That through the hill-gaps came—  
 These were the half-seen setting to our joy ;  
 New bliss unrealized warmed us like wine,  
 And happier hearts than these of thine and mine  
 Had not the Master in his world-employ.

VII.

A bounteous month of joy that August was,  
 Filled with low voice of seas, and lower voice  
 Of love, and warm with love's intensest heart !

See where the hills dip down, hearken the noise  
Of falling waters, eager to depart  
From off the crags and pass  
Into the cool green ocean depths. The land  
Singeth aloud for love ; and crimson flush  
The skies at eve and morn ; the uplands blush  
In sheets of heather blossom where we stand.

## VIII.

Give me thine hand, sweet love ! it is not meet  
Thou should'st be silent when the world doth sing !  
Or is thy silence gladder than my words ?  
Poor words ! and yet what sweetness shall they bring  
When this our cup of joy seems broken shards  
Lying about our feet !  
“ BEHOLD, I LOVE THEE ! ” From the midst of this  
The fairest scene beneath the canopy,  
An echo cometh, “ *Thee,* ” and only “ *Thee !* ”  
*O love, BE silent—answer with a kiss !*

## IX.

And ah ! the sacred morns that crowned the week—  
The path betwixt the mountains and the sea,  
The Sannox water and the wooden bridge,  
The little church, the narrow seats—and we  
That through the open window saw the ridge  
Of Fergus, and the peak

Of utmost Cior Mohr—nor held it wrong,  
When vext with platitude and stirless air,  
To watch the mist wreaths clothe the rock-scarps  
bare,  
And in the pauses hear the blackbird's song.

## X.

O nest, leaf-hidden, Dryad's green alcove,  
Half-islanded by hill-brook's seaward rush,  
My love's still bower, where none may come but I !  
Where in clear morning prime and high noon hush  
With only some old poet's book I lie !  
Sometimes a lonely dove  
Calleth her mate, or droning honey thieves  
Weigh down the bluebell's nodding campanule ;  
And ever singeth through the twilight cool  
Low voice of water and the stir of leaves.

## XI.

Perfect are August's golden afternoons !  
All the rough way across the fells, a peal  
Of joy-bells ring, not heard by alien ear.  
The jealous brake and close-shut beech conceal  
The sweet bower's queen and mine, albeit I hear  
Hummed scraps of dear old tunes.  
I push the boughs aside, and lo, I look  
Upon a sight to make one more than wise,—  
A true maid's heart, shining from tender eyes,  
Rich with love's lore, unlearnt in any book.

## XII.

Sweet is this girl as heart's-ease after rain—  
A sudden wonder to the wayfarers,  
Like silver-gleaming birch in dusk of pines !  
Ah ! Paris never saw that head of hers,  
Sun-touched in gloom of leaves as now it shines,  
Else Troy had saved her pain ;  
For head of Juno port, Minerva's eyes,  
Queen Venus' grace upon her island strand,  
Hath this dear maid—so from the shepherd's hand,  
She takes the apple with a sweet surprise.

## XIII.

And if this beauty fitly doth enshrine  
A maid's pure troth, how fitly that of wife !  
O subtle essence, meaning ultimate  
Of Love's dear mystery, life's inner life !  
We feel thy power, and eagerly await  
Till thou arise and shine,  
O Sun of final union, on our bliss.  
Shine quickly—give our hearts a welcome rest,  
For loneliness is lonely at the best,  
And partner'd poverty more sweet than this !

## XIV.

Through the light tresses of the birchen copse  
The sun sprays down a wealth of wavering gold ;  
And with a rustle like my lady's skirt

The winds draw close the leaves about our fold.  
Deep-bosom'd in the cool ravine, and girt  
By scorching treeless slopes,  
In the deep tide of bliss our hearts we steep—  
The same sad hearts that now in silence mourn—  
Were there no hope in God, O love forlorn,  
The memory of these days might make us weep !

## xv.

Yet is there hope, for we in God have trust,  
And in ourselves—knowing He will not let  
Slip from His hand two lives, that He hath  
brought  
Together by strange ways—doth not forget  
To finish well the web Himself hath wrought !  
Is not the Weaver just ?  
Lo, He shall see His labour perfected ;  
No gracious promise registered above  
Will He permit to fail, nor this our Love  
Will He let ravel like a knotless thread !

## xvi.

So in this arbour green, my love and I  
In pleasant wise made short the afternoon.  
Half-hid in bracken at her feet I lay,  
Regretting not the glory of our June  
While mellow August in our grasp did stay  
And hardly did we sigh

That through our fingers did the sweet time glide,  
Being so rich in joy, we did not deem  
That one day we should waken from our dream  
And in the isle of bliss no longer bide.

## XVII.

Yet since each hour had its especial joy,  
Each eve to south or north along the shore  
We went, and saw the shallow sands  
Gleam through the pure green brine, and Sannox  
pour  
His ocean-tribute from the sterile lands ;  
Or gather'd woodflowers shy ;  
And in the gloaming came we singing home,  
Until we reach'd the parting of the ways,  
Where with my hand in hers a maiden says,  
*" O love, to one more of our days an end hath come !"*

## XVIII.

" Do I remember," say'st thou, " that still night,  
The harvest moon high overhead, we strayed  
Down the white road ; and over Brodick bay  
We saw the Holy Isle couch undismayed,  
Vast, vague, and leonine, and the array  
Of piled cloud-peaks bright  
Along the dim horizon of the South ? "  
Yea, I remember ; yet more clear I trace  
The dear surrender of one moon-lit face,  
And, strangely clear, the smile about her mouth.

## XIX.

One long, long August day the heather bent  
Under her feet ; still morning's young sunshine  
Caressed the pale gold hair, noon's pulsing fire  
Made all her cheek's faint rose incarnadine ;  
Her eyes watch'd the low sun beyond Cantyre  
Fill all the fair extent  
Of ample cloudland and the narrow seas  
With purple glamour, haze of shining gold,  
And the grey curtains of the night-mists fold  
The islands of the nether Hebrides.

## XX.

Not distant from her side through all that day,  
I wonder'd at the lithe grace of the maid,  
Her bearing high yet frank, as one well used  
To the free airs that round the hill-tops played.  
A calm sweet nobleness of mien infused  
In men the wish to pay  
The homage of their best, ever to show  
Their highest to her eyes, being so pure  
That naught unsightly can her look endure,  
But, shamefaced, from her presence forth doth go.

## XXI.

Just on the edge of the high table-land  
Where lies the lake, deep girdled with morass,  
We found two streams, a torrent and a brook.

Slow-winding to the verge the brook did pass,  
Over its pools heather and harebell shook,  
And brown bent stretch'd a hand  
To the tall rushes on the hither side.  
Adown the mountain like a lightning flash  
From the sheer cliffs the torrent waters dash,  
With the sweet valley streamlet fain to bide ;

## XXII.

But from the granite basin where they meet,  
Lo, the still brook doth take the headlong pace  
And fiercer heart-throb of the mountain-born !  
Through the long pass it foams in arrowy race,  
Forgetful of the still land left forlorn ;  
Behind their ardent feet  
The old course lies, a scarce remember'd thread,  
As, glad at heart, they seek the parent sea—  
So of two lives this is the mystery,  
And *thou* already hast the riddle read.

## XXIII.

From lone October's melancholy days  
My heart goes back, remembering all the joy  
That August held, and sweet September's bliss,  
More fully known and charged with less alloy ;  
Yea, backward looking, sure I am of this,  
That love in woodland ways

Is not more sweet than by the fireside ;  
And nearest to my heart of hearts doth stay  
The gracious duty fitly done each day,  
Thy work at morn and song at eventide.

## XXIV.

For wafts of unforgotten music come  
All unawares into my lonely room,  
To thrill me with the memories of the past—  
Sometimes a tender voice from out the gloom,  
A light hand on the keys, a shadow cast  
Upon a learned tome  
That blurs somewhat Alpha and Omega,  
A touch upon my shoulder, a pale face  
Upon whose perfect curves the fire-light plays,  
Or love-lit eyes, the sweetest e'er I saw.

## XXV.

These are but idle visions that I trace,  
And yet their summer radiance lights my soul.  
They tell me that this wind weeps not the loss  
Of Love's ripe grain, that though the waters roll  
Firm stands our bridge of faith—it spans across  
This empty interspace—  
Its further arch springs from a land of peace  
That lieth towards the morning ; in that land  
A home for thee and me doth surely stand,  
Around whose hearth-fire shall our souls find ease.

## XXVI.

Far in the deep of Arden wood it lies ;  
About it pleasant leaves for ever wave.  
Through charmèd afternoons we wander on,  
And at the sundown reach the seas that lave  
The golden isles of blessed Avalon.  
When the sweet daylight dies,  
Out of the gloom the ferryman doth glide  
To take us both into a younger day ;  
And as the twilight land recedes away,  
My lady draweth closer to my side.

## XXVII.

Thus to a granary for our winter need  
We bring these gleanings from the harvest field ;  
Not the full crop we bring, but only sheaves  
At random ta'en from autumn's golden yield—  
One handful from a forest's fallen leaves ;  
Yet shall this grain be seed  
Wherewith to sow the furrows year by year —  
These wither'd leaves of other springs the pledge,  
When *thou* shalt hear over our hawthorn hedge  
The mavis to his own mate calling clear.

## XXVIII.

For us no early sun shall ever shine,  
And never in the dusk a moon shall rise,  
But through our hearts shall run a sudden thrill

---

And dews of memory dim the yearning eyes.  
The clouds that cast their shadows on the hill,  
The mist's swift changing line,  
Upon the sea the sheets of driving rain—  
These are, and pass, like to a tale well told ;  
But Life and Love shall not so slip our hold,  
While suns and moons like these with us remain.

1883.

## FORD BERÊTON.

HIMSELF.

### I.

THREADING through the ripening barley,  
Up the long rigs of the corn,  
'Cross the meadows, with their mallows  
Wet with dews of early morn,  
Through the waving oats and barley,  
With his friend, four-footed Charley,  
Ford Berêton sought the shallows,  
Where the swift white-breasted swallows  
Dash and flash above the river.

Taller just a single handbreadth  
On his sun-burnt flitting feet  
Than the creamy meadow-sweet—  
He, the sweetheart of the meadows,  
Of the trembling woodland shadows,  
Of the flowers and of the hours,  
Sweetheart of the wood-folk hidden  
In the dim wych-hazel bowers !  
River-fairies kiss'd unbidden

His red mouth as he lay dreaming,  
With his hair's gold auriole gleaming

As the sun peep'd in to see.  
Bright as early sunshine he,  
Well-beloved, well loving,  
As the winds and waters free ;  
All alone, but unforsaken,  
Hush'd was Ford by summer bees,  
Watch'd by bright-eyed irises ;

And in meadows, half-awaken  
Heard he chimes of harebells, shaken  
Merrily by small flower-angels.

All the day these glad evangels  
Rang like music in his ear,  
Woodland words and mysteries  
Of the flowery lakeland leas.

Though his heart rang clear and true  
To the human love he knew,  
Still to them his heart was truer,  
To the sunshine and the trees—  
Wooed them like an ardent wooer  
All the morning of his life ;  
For the summer sun was clearer,  
And the August wind was dearer,  
Circling round the fields at strife,  
Rustling strife, and whispering parley  
With the hosts of armed barley,  
In the wide fields by the lake.

Hardly dearer was the human  
Love of tender loving woman,  
Quiet eyes and sad caresses,  
Than the upland winds' embraces,  
And the song of woodland bird.

Ford's small heart was not untender ;  
But as yet it had not stirr'd  
In response to love unwearied,  
Nor could see the soft brown tresses  
Fading into softer grey.

Instant was he to defend her  
Fiercely with small fist and tongue,  
Like a wild-cat brought to bay,  
Desperate to guard its young ;  
Yet he broke from her still keeping,  
Eager for the moorlands ever,  
For the heather and the river,  
And the summer sunshine steeping  
Lake and hill and yellow corn.  
Much he griev'd her mother's mildness  
With his wandering and his wildness.  
Then when bitter bread of grudging  
Or the ache of unthank'd drudging,  
Pain'd in her sore heart the sorest—  
Lost was Ford within the forest,  
Lost with Charley, Tweed, or Royal,  
Good dogs all, and champions loyal,  
Since the earliest break of morn.

Then at evening, scratch'd and torn  
On the hawthorn hedges jagged,  
Wonder small that clothes were ragged—  
Wonder small that one was bending  
Carefully above her mending  
Half the night with fingers worn ;  
While within his crib unwinking,  
Ford slept sound and dreamless sleep.

In the morning, never thinking  
How his clothes were once more mended,  
Folded in well-order'd heap,  
Ford would dress, and to the sheep  
And his shepherd friend would run.  
Just as apt was Ford at races  
With his flocks of horn'd black faces,  
As his friends with twice as many  
Feet to twinkle in the sun.  
True it was, Ford had not any  
Tail to wave aloft in air ;  
But a sturdy right arm had he,  
By the elder people's showing  
Over apt at pebble-throwing.

Yet did Ford his honest share  
Of the shouting and hallooming,  
Of the turning and pursuing,  
And of all that was adoing  
At the folding and unfolding,

At the washing and the smearing,  
And the great day of the shearing—  
Hounding on or backward holding,  
Up and down, and to and fro,  
Mad with rapture, Ford would go !

## II.

But on this especial morn  
Ford went onward through the corn,  
Past the warren and the sunny  
Haunts of crop-ear'd, white-tail'd bunny,  
To his den far out of reach—  
Overhung by sweet-leaf'd beech,  
Underwash'd by limpid water,  
Just above the great black pool  
Where last year Ford saw the otter.

Here in hidden cave enchanted,  
Was the spot by Ford most haunted ;  
Safe and secret, still and cool,  
For, by whomsoever wanted,  
Here was rest from alien rule.

Ford could see the fishes swimming,  
Not a stain the water dimming ;  
Rippling crisply o'er the stones—  
Silent, save for undertones  
From the hazel copse behind,  
Fretted by the fitful wind,  
And the shallow river bickering

O'er the sloping, pebbly reaches—  
Dusky, yet with sunshine flickering  
Through the leaves on either hand  
On the tiny silver beaches,  
And the shining granite sand.

On his throne, moss overgrown,  
King Berêton sits him down ;  
Looks upon his kingdom narrow,  
Lays aside his bow and arrow,  
Calls his subjects to his presence !  
Forth with ready acquiescence  
Two mice come and one lame sparrow.  
Lastly ruddy Robin Redbreast,  
Who with smooth and plumply fed breast,  
Sits a-swing upon the pliant  
Hazel-branches, nearer comes  
For his hoarded dole of crumbs  
Like a gentlemanly client.

Unto them doth Boy Berêton,  
Leaning back his mossy seat on,  
Slow propound his latest query.

Stiffly propp'd upon the arrow  
Stood His Majesty's own sparrow,  
All-important, wise, and cheery ;  
Also, having finish'd eating,  
Both the field-mice back retreating,

Curious peer'd from out their hole.

Ford laid down his broad blue bonnet,  
Red-breast calmly took his dole,  
Wiped his beak, and stepp'd upon it.

Courtier he, but no King's minion,  
Not averse to give opinion  
And consider critically

Even the King's philosophy.

1884.

## FORD BERÊTON.

### HIS PHILOSOPHY.

“ Do you know the silver birches,  
Just below the hawthorn hedges,  
On the great black forest’s edges ? ”

For reply, Sir Robin perches  
On the bonnet’s woollen tassel,  
Bows like an obedient vassal,  
Till the King is satisfied  
With his subject’s strict attention.

“ Then I hardly need to mention  
Whom I saw so quickly hide,  
In the leaves of that wild cherry,  
In his beak a big fat berry  
Stolen from our orchard croft ! ”

Here His Highness frown’d severely,  
And Sir Robin calmly coughed,  
Just to show how very clearly  
This was no affair of his.

“ In the field so wide and sunny  
Where the summer clover is,  
Where each year the mower searches  
For the nests of wild-bee honey,  
All along these silver birches  
Stand up straight in shining row,  
Dewdrops sparkling, shadows darkling,  
In the early morning glow ;  
And in gloaming time they’re gleaming  
White, like angels when I’m dreaming.

“ There among its handsome brothers  
Was one little crooked tree,  
Different from all the others,  
Just as bent as bent could be.

First it crawl’d along the heather  
Till it turn’d up straight again,  
Then it drew itself together  
Like a tender thing in pain ;  
Scarce a single green leaf straggled  
From its twigs so bare and draggled—  
And it really looks ashamed  
When I’m passing by that way,  
Just as if it tried to say—  
‘ Please don’t look at such a maim’d  
Little Cripple-Dick as I ;  
Look at all the rest about,  
Look at them and pass me by,

I'm so crooked, do not flout me,  
Kindly turn your head awry ;  
Of what use is my poor gnarl'd  
Body in this lovely world ?'

" Then I cried for very sorrow,  
And I went up close to say,  
' I must run now, but to-morrow  
I shall bring my dog and stay ;  
We'll not sit below the great ones  
Though they are so very tall,  
Nor below the leafiest straight ones,  
For I love you best of all.'

Then around its little twisted  
Cripp'l'd waist I put my arm,  
Drew it close to me and kiss'd it  
Where the sunshine makes it warm.

*" Robin Red-breast, are you listening ? "*  
Like a knight upon his castle,  
Or a captain on the poop,  
Robin with his bright eyes glistening  
Stood upon the bonnet's tassel,  
Head aside and wings a-droop.

" So that day I ask'd at dinner,  
' Can a birch-tree be a sinner,  
Or grow twisted out and in  
For some elder birch's sin ?'

So they said, 'Depend upon it,  
Here's some new bee in his bonnet !'  
But I had no bee at all—  
Only sprigs of meadow-gall.

"In the afternoon again,  
I did ask my uncle Ben,  
'When at first God made the creatures  
And the garden trees for food,  
Didn't he look on all their features  
And pronounce them very good?  
Can a God of such good will,  
Make lame birches on the hill?'  
'Go,' he said, 'go carry water—  
Fit you better than to chatter  
What you cannot understand !'

"And I think he would have beat me,  
But that Royal from the sheep  
Just then bounded up to greet me,  
Growling in his throat so deep,  
That he quickly went to stand  
T'other side the garden paling.

"So I asked as he was nailing  
Weasels to the orchard wall—  
'All things that are very wicked  
Does God make them crook'd and small?'  
'No,' he answered, 'little thick-head ;  
Pests and weeds wax best of all !'"

What the sense of that might be  
Ford Berêton could not see.

Solemnly these questions deep  
To the sparrow he propounded ;  
But as he was much confounded,  
Having early gone to sleep,  
And the field-mice long had rested  
Cosily within their den,  
Prompt solution he requested  
From Sir Robin Red-breast then—  
Down stepp'd he and peck'd a crumb,  
For the rest, was wisely dumb.

So, when Ford went on the morrow,  
Lo, he found with bitter sorrow,  
From the roots his birch uptorn,  
Saw it cross the meadow borne,  
Watch'd in pleasant wood-shed, scented  
With the chips of fresh-cut pine,  
As his grand-sire carv'd and bent it  
To a rustic quaint design,  
Made a chair with arms well curv'd  
And a back well-smooth'd and fine.

"Thine, my boy, and well-deserv'd  
By that tender heart of thine,  
For from straightest trees," he said,  
"Seats like this are never made ;

But for small and crooked birches  
Carefully the woodman searches."  
Kindly thus Ford's old grandfather,  
"Do not weep, my lad, but rather  
Joy that God can bring from weakness,  
Service noble, fit, and long :  
And may thou and I in meekness  
Be built up as firm and strong.  
Every crooked thing that grows  
Hath a use the Master knows !"

So, his well-beloved seat on  
Nightly sitteth Boy Berêton.

1885.

## FORD BERÊTON.

### HIS WONDERING.

IN the long grass of the meadow  
Ford Berêton sits and talketh,  
To his small self in the shadow.  
With his wooden sword he knocketh  
Somewhat fiercely on the capping  
Of his iron-girded foot gear.  
Problems strange hath Ford Berêton,  
So his own folks call him "queer."  
Argument of knuckle rapping  
Mostly solves the awkward question,

"Can your elders never learn you,"  
Oft they argued in this fashion,  
"To leave what does not concern you  
With much wiser heads than yours?"

Once a master, quick in passion,  
Closed discussion with a blow ;

Unto whom straightway Berêton :  
“ ‘ Hold your hand, sir,’ does not answer  
Little boys who want to know.”

To this furious dominie  
Dauntlessly quoth Boy Berêton.

“ Now, I wonder ”  
(This was ever Ford’s beginning)  
“ If I’m really always sinning  
Like the grown folk say I am ?  
Uncle Ben says last night’s thunder  
Was God’s anger sent to frighten  
Wicked little boys who lifted  
The great sluices of the dam,  
Just to hear the mill-wheel splashing,  
Just to see the sunlight sifted  
Through the drops as they come flashing  
From the big brown wooden boxes  
Down the mill-race to the pool.

Now, I don’t think God unlocks His  
Thunder chamber in the heaven,  
And makes all the black sky lighten  
Just to scare one little boy,  
Who is hardly yet turned seven ! ”

(Ford thought God would not employ  
So much cry for little wool.  
This was childish, I confess ;

But you know the lad was small.  
So I pray, wise people all,  
Pardon him this foolishness.)

"Now, I wonder"—Ford a moment  
Sideways poised his head to listen,  
A far voice that called his name,  
Then resumed without a comment.  
"Now, I wonder,"—pause to squeeze  
Clover tops between his palms,  
Sucking honey like the bees—  
"What a living Pharisee is ?  
There's my uncle Ben, now he is  
Just that kind who sneak and bother,  
Never helping blind or lame,  
Like those who follow'd Christ.

"Preachman came one day to sing,  
Asked severely, '*Ford, who made you ?*'  
'God,' I said, 'made everything.'  
Wasn't he stupid not to know ?  
Turn about, I asked another,  
'*Did the God also make you ?*'  
Easier one couldn't ask,  
Yet they took me so to task,  
Just for saying when he nodded,  
'Is that true ? Well, then, if God did,  
I am sure He must have weigh'd you  
On His biggest pair of scales !'

Why they put me out, and made me  
Carry water from the spring—  
More than twenty pair of pails—  
I could not think. Maybe my feet  
Made the new carpet dirty, or  
They wanted just to shut the door.  
Christ would not shut the door, I know,  
Nor call me off that shining street  
Where the fair white angels sing.”

Reader, prithee kindly pardon  
Ford his foolish childish notions ;  
Far from church, among the moors,  
Dwelt the lad. Friends, be not hard on  
Childish words not wise like yours.  
Ford to church but once had been  
Where he much disturbed devotions,  
With the injudicious queries,  
“Why must Fordie shut his eyes ?”  
“Will that man not soon be done ?”

“Now I’m sure”—the preface varies,  
“If I held Christ by the hand,  
And I asked for all I’m wanting  
So to know, He wouldn’t say,  
‘You’re too young to understand ;  
Now, don’t bother, go away !’  
Now I wonder, when they christened

Me, O *such* a time ago ”  
(Here again he paused and listened  
Very near he heard his name),  
Maybe they forgot to make me  
Good, like story-boys, you know !  
And I wonder, if the Christ came,  
Would He send me out or take me  
In our parlour on His knee,  
As He used to do those other  
Little lads in Galilee ?  
Now I have not any brother ;  
If I had, I'd ask Christ Jesus,  
And He'd take him up and hold him,  
Like He lov'd him, tenderly—  
*Then I'd climb the other knee ! ”*

Suddenly is closed the thesis,  
Nemesis his collar seizes,  
Roughly setteth Ford his feet on ;  
Endeth quest of Boy Berêton.

## FORD BERETON.

### HIS HOME COMING.

“ And it shall come to pass that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by.”

CRISPLY up the frozen road,  
Roaming here and there abroad,  
Ford Berêton's small feet clatter'd ;  
Starting rabbits out of hedges,  
Waterfowl from fenny sedges,  
Hares along the pasture's edges,  
Scapegrace dog and master strode.

Weightier-footed than his master,  
In the twilight Royal patter'd  
O'er the stiff grass grey with frost,  
Swinging slow or bounding faster  
Like a stalwart canine ghost.

See, they cross the fertile fallows,  
Now the ice-bound lake-side shallows ;  
Soon they enter on the poor lands  
Of the burnt and matted heather,  
Waste morass and trackless moorlands,  
Ranging heedlessly together.

What reck they of black horizon,  
Or of inky gloom that lies on  
All the bleak blue mountain ranges,  
As the face of nature changes,  
And the landmarks dimmer grow  
With the coming of the snow.

First the broad far-sailing flakes  
Fall in silence slow and heavy ;  
Then a mirthful dancing bevy  
Scuds across the sullen lakelets.  
Soon a moaning wind awaking  
All the heavy cloud-folds shaking,  
Drives the steady stinging flakelets,  
Making Ford's cheeks redder glow  
In the turmoil of the snow.

How the pair rejoiced and revelled,  
Leapt and barked and laughed and shouted,  
Charged abreast and fell back routed,  
Clenched and fought and rolled dishevelled  
In the snow-drifts to and fro !

“ Find the way now, good dog Royal ! ”  
Struggling upward quoth the boy, all  
Sober'd with the ghastly starkness  
Of the single spectral birches  
In the swiftly growing darkness ;  
“ Seek it, seek it out, good Royal ! ”  
And the great dog, strong and loyal,  
Through the snow-wreaths round and round  
All about the moorland searches,  
With his nose against the ground,  
Sought and sought and never found.

In the silence yet more dreary  
Boy Berêton's limbs grew weary,  
Courage waned with Royal gone ;  
Wearier grew they till he rested,  
Chill and heartless, on a stone  
In a covert grim and eery  
    Deep among the sheltering rocks.

From the pocket on his side  
Slow he drew the precious box,  
Where his mice had lived together  
    In their cave of finest wool.  
Scarce a week ago one died,  
Frost-nipp'd by the icy weather,  
And was borne in funeral  
From the threshold of the school

To its grave beneath the wall,  
With the pomp of mourners all.

As he opens, beaded eyes  
O'er the edge a moment rise.  
One small hand the mouse doth hold,  
With the other, blue and cold,  
On its smooth head he caressed it ;  
For a space forgetful smiled  
At the outer darkness wild,  
Smiled to see it crouch and nestle  
In its cosy bed of wool ;  
In his bosom heard it rustle,  
As he stamped his frozen feet on  
Narrow ledge not yet invaded  
By the fast encroaching snows.

Instantly the gladness faded  
As the drifting snow came sweeping,  
Heavy wreaths in silence heaping  
Sheltered nook and stony seat on.  
"Well, at least," quoth Boy Berêton,  
"Mousie's warm, though I am cold !"

"Now I wonder," with a flicker  
Of the old Ford in his eyes  
As he watched the snow come thicker,  
"Are the angels warm and rosy  
When the snow-storms fill the skies.

As in summer when the sun  
Makes their cloud-beds warm and cosy ?  
And I wonder if they're sleeping  
Through this bitter winter weather ;  
Or aloft their watches keeping,  
As the shepherds said of them,  
Hosts and hosts of them together,  
Singing o'er the lowly stable,  
In that little Bethlehem ! ”

And the pitying angels slowly  
Sang their Christ songs, pure and holy,  
As they saw his limbs grow rigid  
And his features blue and frigid ;  
And God hearkened more his wonderings  
Than the starry chariots' thunderings—  
Shoutings of the sons of God.

Ford's young feet had never trod  
In the devious way that brings  
Doubts and fatal questionings.  
Early trusted he the sorrow  
Wrought on Israel's Calvary,  
Trusted God for each to-morrow,  
Asking not what God might be.

“ Wonder who will come and take me  
From the snow, so white and deep ?  
If it's very hard to die,

Or like going fast asleep,  
Only just a little sounder ?  
Maybe Christ Himself will wake me,  
Maybe let His Mary-mother  
Comfort mine, and throw around her  
Arms that nursed Him when a boy.

“ And however bad am I,  
He would let me be His lamb,  
Rather than with Lazarus lie  
On the breast of Abraham !

“ Maybe God sends him the grown ones,  
While the little lambs, the lone ones,  
Go to the Lord Jesus’ bosom.  
And I wonder if my mousie  
Will be sleeping in his housie  
When they find me in the snow ? ”

Here grew Ford a little drowsy,  
Looked one way and then another,  
Only saw the snow keep falling,  
All his tiny covert walling  
From the world of warmth and home.

Feebly now the slow words come,  
“ Good night, mousie ; good night, mother :  
Take me, Christ, to Thee to keep—  
I’ll be warmer when I waken.  
Coming, mother—I am coming.”

But 'twas Death, with fingers numbing,  
Through the darkness that was coming  
In the sheeted silence deep.

Distant murmurs, rising, falling,  
Barking dogs and shepherds calling :  
Great red Royal, far before,  
Finds the body of his master,  
And like one who fears disaster,  
To the heavens calling "Faster,"  
Sends a great deep-throated roar ;  
And the shepherds round and round  
Shake the welkin, echoing, "FOUND !"

And at home when they undress'd him,  
Lo, one frozen hand firm closing  
Round the cage deep in his breast—  
Inside, mousie warmly dozing !

This the tender little mother,  
Bending over to caress him,  
Joying in each soft drawn breath,  
Heard in silence still as death,  
Trying hard her sobs to smother,  
With her face against the wall—  
"Mother, mother, please don't wake me ;  
Dear Lord Christ has come to take me—  
Me and mousie, cage and all !"

## A LEAF FROM THE DAMASK ROSE.

THERE'S a leaf in the book of the damask rose  
That glows with a tender red ;  
From the bud through the bloom to the dust it goes,  
Into rose dust fragrant and dead.

And this word is inscribed on the petals fine  
Of that velvety purple page—

“ Be true to thy youth while yet it is thine  
Ere it sink in the mist of age,

*“ Ere the bursting bud be grown  
To a rose nigh overblown,  
And the wind of the autumn eves  
Comes blowing and scattering all  
The damask drift of the dead rose leaves  
Under the orchard wall.*

“ Like late-blown roses the joy-days flit,  
And soon will the east winds blow ;  
So the love years now must be lived and writ  
In red on a page of snow.

“ And here the rune of the rose I rede,  
    ’Tis the heart of the rose and me—  
O youth, O maid, in your hour of need,  
    Be true to the sacred three—  
Be true to the love that is love indeed,  
    To thyself, and thy God, these three !

“ *Ere the bursting bud is grown  
To a rose nigh overblown,  
And the wind of the autumn eves  
Comes blowing and scattering all  
The damask drift of the dead rose leaves  
Under the orchard wall.*”





"WHAT OF THE DAY, O ANTWERP BELLS ?"

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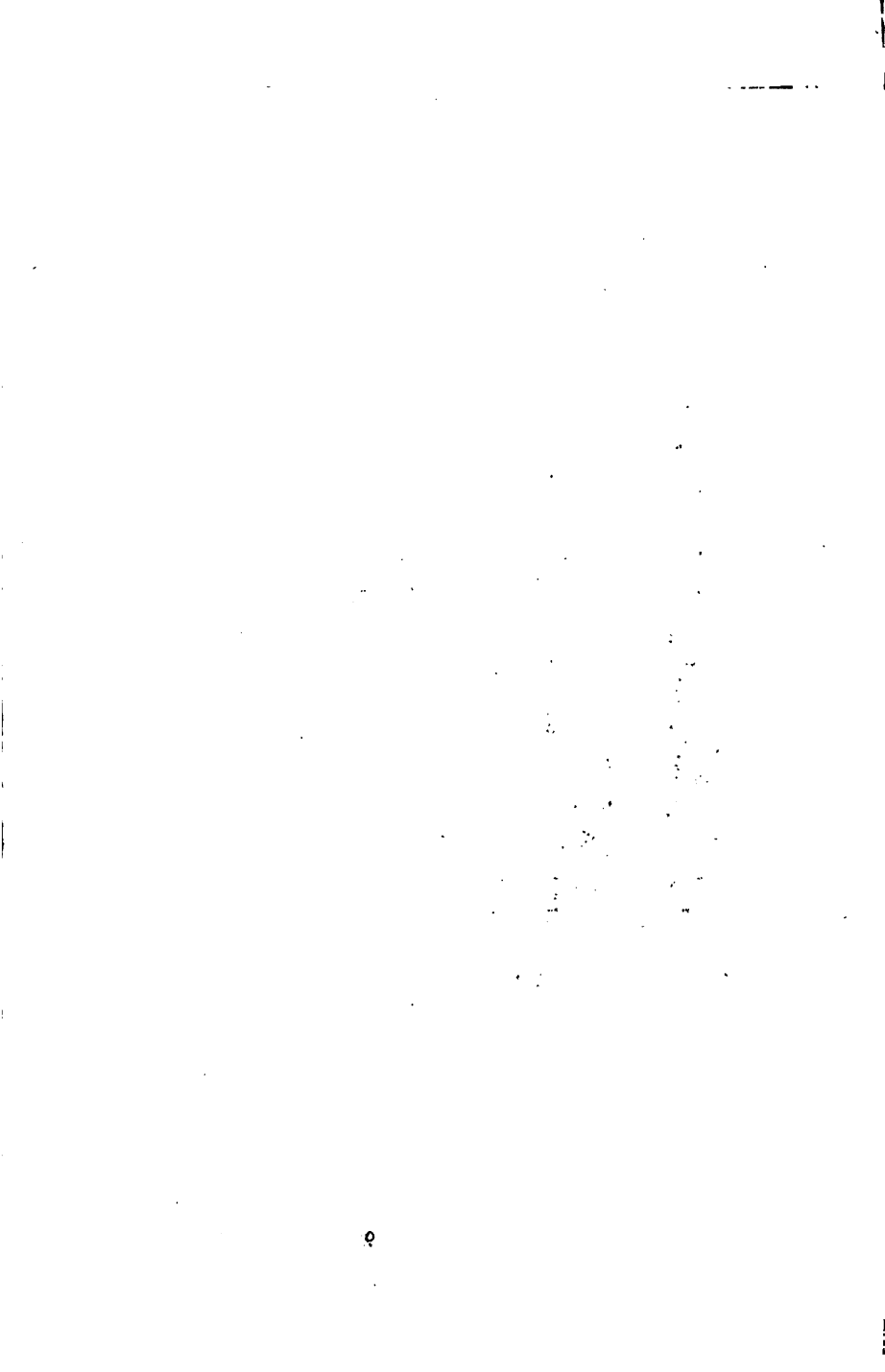
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## THE BELLS OF ANTWERP.

### I.

WHAT of the night, O Antwerp bells,  
Over the city swinging,  
Plaintive and sad, O kingly bells,  
In the winter midnight ringing ?

And the winds in the belfry moan  
From the sand-dunes waste and lone,  
And these are the words they say,  
The turreted bells and they—

*" Callerhout, Krabbendyk, Calloo,"*  
Say the noisy, turbulent crew ;  
*"Jabbekê, Chaam, Waterloo ;*  
*Hoggerhaed, Sandvaet, Lilloo,*  
*We are weary, a-weary of you !*  
*We sigh for the hills of snow,*  
*For the hills where the hunters go,*  
*For the Matterhorn, Wetterhorn, Dom,*  
*For the Dom ! Dom ! Dom !*

*For the summer sun and the rustling corn,  
And the pleasant vales of the Rhineland valley."*

## II.

What of the morn, O Antwerp bells?  
In the east is the daybreak shining?  
Hasten your chimes by an hour, O bells;  
Peace, O winds, from your pestilent whining—

*" Callerhout, Krabbendyk, Calloo,"  
Go the jangling, turbulent crew;  
"Jabbeké, Chaam, Waterloo,  
Hoggerhaed, Sandvaet, Lilloo,  
We are weary, a-weary of you!"*

And the wind complain'd as it went on its way,  
And this was its plaintive lay—  
*" Ischia, Spezzia, Bex,  
Isola Bella, and Aix,  
To be aye and aye and aye,  
In the summer sun, and the rustling corn,  
And the pleasant vales of the Rhineland valley."*

## III.

What of the day, O Antwerp bells?  
Silvery clear your warning,  
For the wailing winds had gone on their way,  
Ere ye rang your chimes in the morning.

Never more, never more they say,  
    *" Callerhout, Krabbendyk, Calloo,"*  
    That jangling, turbulent crew,  
    *"Jabbeké, Chaam, Waterloo,*  
    *Hoggerhaed, Sandvaet, Lilloo,*  
    *We are weary, a-weary of you."*

They were weary of Bergen-op-Zoom,  
    Of a land as dull as the tomb,  
    *Of the boisterous bells of Boom,*  
    *With their Boom, Boom, Boom,*  
    *And black-a-vised Hollander gloom.*

They have gone where the birds all sing,  
Where the ring doves mate in the spring ;  
    And what say ye to-day  
    Ere I too go on my way—  
    From your belfry carv'd and grey?

*" Canterbury, Winchester, Bray,*  
    *Edinburgh, Elderslie, Spey—*  
    *O the summer sun and the rustling corn,*  
    *And pleasanter vales than the Rhineland valley."*

## A SUMMER DAY.

AWAY from the city's blistering heat,  
From clang of crank and piston's beat,  
We stray'd down Chester's galleried street  
To the bank of her dreaming river.

For not her glamour of grey renown,  
Nor minster turrets shining down  
On the broad-walled old cathedral town,  
Might hold us long from the river.

Sweet was the shade in the cloisters dim,  
Sweet the choir-boys' chanted hymn ;  
But sweeter the wind on the water's rim  
And the iris beds in the river.

*Ripple of water, drip of oar,  
Hum of bee on the blossom'd shore,  
Stirr'd not the silence the landscape wore,  
A summer day long on the river.*

In still procession pass they by  
The hidden blooms in the coves that lie,  
And the trees that underarch the sky  
And shadow the dreaming river.

Sweetest of all, from her cushion'd ease,  
A girl's eyes watch'd the daisied leas,  
And shy little ringlets played with the breeze  
That played with the dreaming river.

*Ripple of water, drip of oar,  
Hum of bee on the blossom'd shore;  
But sweeter than aught that the May wind bore  
Was my love's low voice on the river.*

O love, true love, with the eyes so grey,  
What love more meet for a summer's day,  
For a breathless afternoon in May,  
On the breast of an English river.

And yet there comes as I gaze on thee,  
Of bitterest storms the 'memory,  
Of surging waves on a winter sea  
Far out from a summer river.

Of a ship hard press'd on a wild grey main,  
Swept by the spray and the thunder rain,  
Of two that hardly hoped again  
To float on a summer river.

Of a white girl hand that was strong alway,  
Two brave and faithful eyes of grey,  
And a love as meet for wintriest day  
As for summer's noon on the river.

Therefore I hold thee, love of mine,  
Precious above the gold most fine,  
Far more fair than the white sunshine  
That is bathing this summer river.

*Ripple of water, drip of oar,  
Hum of bee on the blossom'd shore,  
Sing in my heart, though I no more  
Float with my love on the river.*

ALONE.

WHAT wilt thou leave me, O belovèd,  
But the trees and the hollow skies?  
Wilt thou take from me the life of life,  
And the glory of thine eyes?

Did we not watch the sun together,  
Thou in the stillness, I by thee?  
Did I watch the sunset or thee, my sweet?  
Thine eyes, or the far-hung sea?

A lily ensheathed art thou, O love,  
In the hues of the folded rose,  
Fresher than earliest summer flower  
To her matins as she goes.

I see my love in the sullen night  
With a glory around her hair;  
And the night is darker all about  
Because that her face is fair.

In the beeches above I hear the wind,  
From the south a message bring ;  
Is the willow-whisper the sob of her voice,  
Or the birch trees' murmuring ?

For my love hath a voice most tender-sweet,  
With a thrill of pain in its tone,  
Like the throbbing strings of the pine-wood harp  
When the winds therein make moan.

But the barrèd doors shall fall apart,  
And her voice from silence break—  
The gladsome strength of jubilant morn  
In the heart of midnight wake.

1883.

## NOT ALONE.

On a morn when the seas are flashing blue,  
And the hills stand round about,  
From the lintels low of a seaward door  
Is not this my love looks out,

With a morning sweetness deep in her eyes,  
And a lithe grace as she goes?  
Wilt thou come, my love, up the sides of the glen?  
I will find thee a sweet wild rose.

The heights of the hills above our heads  
In a glamour of glory lie,  
As we pass hand-joined as lovers should  
'Twixt the speedwell and the sky. \*

Clasped are our hearts as hand holds hand,  
Strength-stayed for the rockiest road;  
Not the thinnest veil keeps our spirits twain,  
And nothing keeps us from God.

## THE CHOICE OF HERAKLES.

PLEASURE.                      HERAKLES.                      VIRTUE.

PLEASURE.

COME, Herakles, and I will show to thee  
The places where the hidden treasures be—  
The riches and the joy of life. Come now  
And pluck the ruddy apple from the bough ;  
Take thou thy joy on flowery beds of ease,  
Deep in the orchards of the Hesperides.

VIRTUE.

Nay, Herakles, be wise as thou art strong,  
And go thou through the kingdoms righting wrong ;  
For the springtime is now upon the earth,  
When every husband sows his garden garth.  
This is thy seedtime too, O Herakles ;  
Be heedful, therefore, of thy destinies.  
The stern-browed Fates no second choice allow ;  
If thou would'st reap, drive straight thy furrow now.

## PLEASURE.

But see, I pray, where each glad Bacchanal  
Lieth at length beneath the vine-clad wall.  
The languid lutes plead through the enchanted air  
To banish far dull thought and barren care ;  
And tendance sweet of snowy-bosomed maid  
Shall Aphrodite send thee in the shade.  
Yea, peradventure thou herself may'st meet,  
The dewdrops kissing both her dainty feet.

## HERAKLES.

Take me, O fair one, to thy land of bliss,  
My lips are parch'd for Aphrodite's kiss.

## VIRTUE.

Abide thee, Herakles ; consider well  
Among what folk thou dost desire to dwell ;  
For Zeus himself may not his life recast,  
Nor change one jot the unreturning Past.  
Albeit thou shalt not couch on asphodel,  
Neither shall fair-hair'd Circe cast her spell,  
Nor o'er the golden chalice subtly smile,  
In the high palace of her woodland isle ;  
Work shalt thou have, one maiden for thy wife,  
And honour from good women all thy life.  
Come, Herakles, and Hebe shall rejoice,  
And forth shall ring Selene's silver voice ;

With godlike kisses twain shall greet thee there,  
Grey-eyed Athene, red-lipped Demeter.

PLEASURE.

Ah, thou and I are human, Herakles ;  
We do not love to herd with deities,  
Nor sit at the Olympian council-board ;  
But Laughter shall we have for bosom-lord,  
And Dionysian mysteries shall see  
In the sweet glades of sacred Thessaly.

Lo, in the dance the wine-drench'd coronal  
From shoulder white and golden hair doth fall !  
Anigh his breast each youth doth hold a head,  
Twin flushing cheeks, and locks unfileted,  
Swifter and swifter doth the revel move  
Athwart the dim recesses of the grove.

Come, then, and all these things thou shalt assay,  
O mighty son of Zeus and Alkmene.

VIRTUE.

O Herakles, and wast thou made for this,  
These thews and sinews for unworthy bliss ?  
Thy godlike limbs to grace a Maenad's dance,  
For any wanton's kiss that countenance ?  
But thou, if amaranth thou make thy bed,  
Shalt never see thy labours perfected,  
Nor gain the meed of all the people's praise,  
Nor win Olympus after many days.

Deeds great and mighty wait for thee to do,  
A world of perilous quests to venture through,  
To save the folk of many an ancient state  
From beast that lays their borders desolate ;  
And Earth-Preserver shall thy name be called ;  
On thy stout shoulders thou the world shalt hold ;  
Thine oaken club shall be a name of fear,  
And in thine hand the ashen-shafted spear.  
A god-like sacrifice they shall thee bring,  
Yea, many a crisp-wooled ram for offering ;  
And in thy need Pallas Athene grave  
From Erebos and Hades shall thee save.

## HERAKLES.

O white-robed maid, no craven heart am I,  
Nor fear the press where arrows hurtling fly,  
And through the shield crashes the driven spear—  
On dreadful days thou shalt the war-cry hear—  
“Aoi, Herakles, son of Zeuspatér!”

And yet, O Queen, why should one shun to care  
In his hot youth for youthful dalliance ?  
Do not the young lambs in the meadows dance  
From mere delight to live ? Then why not we,  
The young blood in us surging like the sea ?

## VIRTUE.

Art thou no better than the beast that hies  
Unto the altar garlandèd and dies ?

Thou dost not so propose to spend thy life,  
Till at thy throat doth grate the slayer's knife ;  
If ill deeds thou wouldst shun in after time,  
Do noble things in this thy youthful prime.  
If to these guileful words thou giv'st no ear,  
That other siren song thou need'st not fear ;  
Nor shall their subtlest singing make thee yield,  
Or leave thy good ship for their flowery field.  
So to thine haven thou shalt win aright,  
Nor leave thy bones in cold sea-caves of night,  
And walk thyself, a shade 'mong shadows grey,  
Through the dim realm of dread Persephone.

## PLEASURE.

See, Herakles, the palace portals bright  
In Cyprus burnishèd for thy delight,  
Where Aphrodite reigneth in her prime,  
And laughter ringeth all the summer time.  
There no laborious years thou shalt endure,  
Unto no tyrant king pay forfeiture,  
Nor wade to Death through never-ending pain ;  
There hemlock branches make a languorous gloom,  
And heavy-headed poppies drip perfume  
In secret arbours set in garden close ;  
And all the air, one glorious breath of rose,  
Shakes not a dainty petal from the trees,  
Nor stirs a ripple on the Cyprian seas,—  
There shalt thou quaff, in silence half-divine,

From golden cup the honey-hearted wine.  
In all that land is heard no sound of pain,  
Save Cytherea's doves their love complain ;  
And lightfoot Dryades shall grant thy prayer,  
Upon thy shoulders place their fingers fair,  
And looking up, the shy love in their eyes,  
Shall stir thy sluggish pulse in wondrous wise.  
Waste not thy time in idly counting cost,  
Or manifold delight thy soul hath lost ;  
If thou deny to Love thy summer day,  
What maid shall love thee in thy winter grey?

## VIRTUE.

O son of Zeus, beware her subtle words,  
Two-edged are they, and keen like battle-swords ;  
For if thou yield to her thy destiny,  
Close-pent in Circe's swine-stye thou shalt lie ;  
Nor shalt thou 'scape by any cunning art  
Till thou hast lost all thine immortal part,  
And diest, as the swine do, utterly.

But trust, O Herakles, thy youth to me,  
And thou shalt be immortal as thy sire.  
Thou shalt attain the heart of thy desire—  
The purest maid Olympus doth uphold,  
Whose smile gives youth and beauty to the old—  
Hebe shall love thee, Here's fairest child,  
Who in the midst of heaven walks undefiled.

## HERAKLES.

O maid, take thou my hand, and let us go—  
Thy bondman I, in years of weal and woe !  
Yea, though the way be rough and wondrous hard,  
And Hades' horrid portals triply barred,  
Yet with the help of gods I will pass through,  
And whatsoe'er a mortal can, will do.  
So help me thou, and mine own father Zeus ;  
If in my veins there flows no earthly juice,  
But ichor of the gods, of nectar bred,  
And with ambrosial strength divinely fed—  
Then shall I do great deeds undone before,  
Shall win at last the high Olympian floor,  
And stand the peer of god and goddess there  
With Hebe at the side of Zeuspatér.

AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD.

I.

I.

QUEENLIKE along the garden path—  
Stately, albeit with mien that hath  
A daintier grace than daffodil,  
Wind sway'd beneath a southland hill—  
Cometh my queen of girls. She seems  
That very maiden won in dreams,  
Whose yearning eyes evanishing,  
Haunted my fancy all the spring.

2.

Gruff March, thou month of storm and fret  
Bring forth thine earliest violet,  
Primrose, or pale anemone,  
And all thy lion front make gay  
With glow of gorse-bloom, flaming high  
On breezy uplands near the sky ;  
For at thy lamblike out-going  
Was born the flower of all the spring.

## 3.

Say, sweet, if I could take thy hand,  
And in some haunted woodland stand  
With love that sanctifieth all,  
Could not this love of ours recall,  
In form more fair than mortal mould,  
The lovers of the days of old—  
Their pale sweet brows engarlanding  
With the fresh flowers of this new spring?

## 4.

Love-passionate from depth of shade,  
Would come that Galilean maid  
Whom Queen's apparel never won,  
Nor treasures of King Solomon ;  
Ruth too, whom farmer Boaz saw,  
Among the sheaves in Ephratah ;  
And through the boskage, moving tall,  
Sweet Eve, the mother of us all.

## 5.

And March himself would curb his play,  
And breathe like an Arcadian May,  
While in the woodlands hand in hand,  
A pair of living lovers stand,  
And favour'd converse gladly hold  
With lovers of the days of old ;  
While all the riches of the spring  
Break forth in wondrous blossoming.

## II.

## I.

I never saw that wood save in a dream—  
Nor any wight with unanointed eyes  
May see the marvel—wade the flowery aisles,  
Arch'd with a dim magnificence of leaves ;  
Not such as Dante saw, but carpeted  
With a fair carpet of the flowers of old,  
Whose names I scarce can guess—not common  
blooms,

But lotus, amaranth and asphodel,  
And great white lilies floating on the meres,  
Fit barges for the court of Faërie.  
And a blue sky o'erarch'd the forest arch,  
And a blue sea enisled ; and yet the wood  
Was English, and fresh English air  
Puls'd in its noonday quiet.

I and she

Were all alone, and overhead the doves  
Set all the wood a-murmuring with love ;  
But other sound was none, only ourselves,  
Two dreamers in a paradise of dreams.  
Thus hand in hand beneath a bank of bloom  
We stood, nor were afraid at all, and up  
Through the sweet dim arcades a woman came,  
Knit in the fashion of a larger time,  
And stamp'd more clearly with the image of God ;

Who took my maid by the right hand, and look'd  
Within her eyes, and smil'd at what she saw  
In their clear depths, and after that she spake :

## 2.

“ I am the Mother Eve,  
The mother of all flesh.  
Glad am I Faith and Love to see,  
And to refresh  
The thirsting of mine eyes  
Ev'n in the midst of Paradise.  
With sight of earthly daughter like to thee.  
The primal blessing have I known,  
The primal curse,  
As no one of my race may know ;  
Yet have I learn'd to grow  
In faith and trust—to suffer not alone,  
When all the universe  
Was nought but darkness and a howling waste,  
And all the plan of God seem'd turn'd to naught ;  
When I the mother sought  
Beside the dead son's head to lay mine own ;  
Nor yet forgot my first-born, whom I thought  
The man who should redeem the evil days.

“ Yea, ev'n when chas'd,  
Accursèd, from the presence of the Lord,  
Over the Eastern waste,  
In the dead time of night he heard

His mother's voice that comforted.  
The breast that erstwhile fed  
Panted above him, like a bird  
Over her young one fallen from the nest,  
Whom not her feeble force can raise,  
Yet hovereth and cannot rest  
All the night season ; when the days  
Are hottest, fain would be a shadow for him.  
So yearned I, until he found abode,  
And built a city in a land,  
Remote and dim,  
Yet not forgotten of the face of God.  
My daughter, in the desert sand  
Thy feet may sink,  
And thou thirst at the well to drink ;  
Yet shalt thou sing  
Thy song of wayfaring,  
Nor sing it lonely—twain are not alone.  
Go then, my children, hand in hand,  
Till ye have grown  
One spirit, worthy to possess the land."

## 3.

With mellow fall her voice ceas'd, and she drew  
Into the dusky covert of the wood ;  
And after she was wholly pass'd away  
A voice floated like perfume through the air :

## 4

## SONG.

“ Pleasant is sunshine after rain,  
    *Pleasant the sun ;*  
To cheer the parched land again,  
    *Pleasant the rain.*

“ Sweetest is joyance after pain,  
    *Sweetest is joy ;*  
Yet sorest sorrow worketh gain,  
    *Sorrow is gain.”*

## 5.

So died the song,  
And once again we heard the wood-doves moan,  
The breakers churn the shingles on the shore,  
And for a moment were again alone.

But to one point drew all the scattered beams,  
And fresher than a waking rose in May,  
When from its lips the sun doth kiss the dew,  
Upward one came, dividing the dark wood  
With subtlest radiance, and our heart was glad.

A space she let the silence of her eyes  
Speak for her, ere the wonder of her voice  
Brake on us. Lo, the like I never heard,  
Save one, that on a summer Sabbath morn,

Lone in the loneliest dell in Kent, I heard  
Come with the airs that stir about the dawn—  
The nightingale's farewell, so sweet and clear,  
She must have wash'd her throat in morning dew,  
To still the throb of pain. In such a voice,  
And with such morning sweetness, she began :

## 6.

“ Most sweet, my sister, dost thou know,  
Her who doth call thee so,  
Ev'n Ruth of Moab? Unto whom the Lord  
Gave dower of joy above her kin ;  
For a great voice she heard  
Within her house in Moab, and again  
On the red Edom hills,  
When about sundown, after weeping vain,  
Orpah return'd, and only Ruth  
Came to Naomi ; and God enter'd in,  
And all her home-sick crying stills,  
And the keen natural murmur of her youth.

“ *‘ Arise and come,  
Through midnight and through rain,  
Into the sweet cool light of morn,  
And the noontide that ripeneth the corn.’*

“ So the Lord call'd me ;  
And straightway I arose and went,

And evermore clave to Naomi, she  
Whose name is called Bitterness ;  
    And ever less and less  
Became my kin to me,  
    And less and less  
The homestead and the village well,  
And all my widow'd life I gave  
To the thrice widow'd, bearing half her pain,  
    In watching tenderness.

“ And lo, the Lord had joy in store  
For her who only coveted a grave ;  
    And more and more  
When to my feet the ways were hard,  
From the third heaven smiled the Lord,  
And sent His angel thence,  
To me the alien in the children's land,  
With Love for a full recompense.

“ In morning air  
Around Beth-Léhem stood the yellow corn,  
And I, who hardly glean'd on sufferance there ;  
But when that crop was fully garner'd in,  
I wan the crown of many a year,  
    A mighty thing to win—  
A strong man's love, the love that casts out fear.  
O sister mine, young, fair, and dear,  
If such thou hast, hold it most sure ;

For in this bitter sea of strife  
Which men call *Life*,  
Still to endure  
And wait the grave seems all that most  
Can hope ; not as in early days  
Before the people' lost  
The peace God gave them at the first ;  
Yet lost not all  
The love of fields and instinct pastoral.

Yea, hold thou love, for at the worst  
That is an anchorage  
When north winds howl and all the waters rage."

## 7.

Bending, she laid a kiss most sisterly  
Upon my maid's pure forehead, and so flash'd,  
Like gleam of sun on a cloud-blowing day,  
Across the wet ripe corn ; and the dim wood  
Stay'd with us, and the morning grew to noon.  
Then rose a voice, like to the spring of day,  
From the dead noon of night, and unto us  
Who hearken'd, the words seem'd like to these :

## 8.

## SONG.

“Entreat me not  
From thy dear side to rove ;  
For love uplooks to love,  
As earth to heaven above.  
Entreat me not !

“Entreat me not  
To turn from following thee  
On land or over sea,  
Where'er thy foot may be.  
Entreat me not !

“Entreat me not !  
For shall I not resign  
The kinsfolk that were mine,  
And own no God but thine ?  
Entreat me not !

“Entreat me not !  
For where 'tis thine to die,  
In that far country I  
Ensepulchred shall lie.  
Entreat me not !

“Entreat me not !  
For God may me desert,

If less than mine thou art,  
Or aught but death us part !  
Entreat me not !”

## 9.

Straightway at the song's ending were we 'ware  
Of one, warm-splendid like the south, who mov'd  
As used to woodlands, ardent as the glow  
Of Syria's noon ; eyes shining from the dusk  
Of wondrous hair, tender as eyes of doves  
Among the rocks in cedar'd Lebanon ;  
Lips like twin flowers, almost one scarlet flower—  
A dewdrop scarce had resting-place between ;  
And gracious curves of maidenhood, reveal'd,  
Through the white raiment that about her clung,  
As doth the snow on Hermon's sacred head,  
Or the spring glory on the orchard trees.

So without word we knew whoso it was—  
That nameless Shulamite, whose faithfulness  
Is writ for ever in the “Song of Songs.”

## 10.

“Lo, I,” she said, “am she,  
Whom Solomon the king brought from my home,  
Among the vineyards of my northern land,  
That I might be  
Another maid to kiss his sacred hand,

And to his hero-guarded chamber come  
At his most kindly pleasure ;  
But Lebanon doth rear no crouching slave  
To kiss his garment's hem,  
Nor daughter of Jerusalem  
To love dishonour when well purple-clad.

“ And when in boundless measure,  
Right royally to make me glad,  
He pour'd his royal treasure,  
My sick sad heart pursued the grave ;  
Faint grew my soul for fear of sin—  
Swooning, I seem'd to walk within  
The holy calm of cedar temples on  
The sunny slopes of forest Lebanon.

“ No more the perfum'd glooms  
Of Zion's palace rooms,  
Languorous and faint and cool ;  
No more the webs of delicate attire,  
Strange stones, with hearts of fire ;  
No more dull eyes and dead burnt-out desire ;  
But gowns of Syrian wool,  
Wov'n by the fireside looms.  
No more the fiery eyes  
Of the Egyptian queen,  
But starlight through the arches green,  
And west winds singing through the trees,  
Fresh from the blue Sidonian seas.

“ And One was with me, walking there,  
A King of simple men, a manly King,  
*My* King, straight-limb'd and fair ;  
Not one who lusteth delicately,  
For whom from far men bring  
Things pleasing in his sight ;  
To stir the sated gorge of appetite.

“ And yet, through pain, held I to purity,  
Until again my land God let me see ;  
And in no dream I stood  
Once more in our dear wood,  
And at my side close my belovèd moved—  
Ever belovèd, now grown thrice belov'd—  
Love shining in our eyes, and we  
Bond ever each to each, yet ever free.

“ That Love is thus, not less,  
Thine eyes, O maid, confess ;  
That Faith is victory, thou,  
O man, dost surely know.”

## II.

So ending, through the wood we saw her go,  
And somewhere in the shade a song was sung :

## 12.

## SONG.

“Floods cannot drown Love’s breath,  
It fears not Death’s cold wave,  
For Love is strong as Death ;  
*But jealousy*  
*As cruel as the grave.*

“ ‘Where is the gold,’ he saith,  
‘Gold that I freely gave?’  
Nay, Love is strong as Death,  
*But Jealousy*  
*As cruel as the grave.*

“No gold can purchase Faith ;  
But Love thy soul can save ;  
For Love is strong as Death,  
*But Jealousy*  
*As cruel as the grave.”*

## 13.

So underneath the English sky  
These ancient lovers pass them by ;  
Beneath their feet, that knew so well  
The sunburnt plains of Israel  
Or high Iranian mountain plain,  
The northern grass is soft again,

And England's tender springtime brings  
The memories of earlier springs.

There, nurtured in pure Grecian air,  
Came Helen, fairest of the fair ;  
Andromeda, upon her wrist  
The chain-scars Perseus oft had kiss'd ;  
And, widow-like in disarray,  
Dead Hector's wife Andromache.  
These 'neath the fruit-trees blossoming,  
Found old-time love in this new spring.

Then three through English woodlands pass  
Who knew the touch of English grass—  
The crown of love, Queen Guinevere ;  
That winsome girl, above whose bier  
All youth and wifehood wept in vain,  
Queen of our hearts, sweet Lady Jane ;  
And Shakespeare's daughter, who doth bring  
With her the keys of love and spring.

And longing wistful looks they cast  
Upon a love not overpast,  
While back the western wind doth bring  
The sweetly lingering words they sing ;  
And lo, in this wise did they seem  
To sing at ending of my dream,  
As when from winter wakening  
Rings the full chorus of the spring !

## 14.

## SONG.

“Sweet mouth, red lips, broad unwrinkled brow,  
Sworn troth, woven hands, holy marriage vow,  
Unto us make answer, what is wanting now ?  
*Love, Love, Love, the whiteness of the snow ;*  
*Love, Love, Love, and the days of long ago.*

“Broad lands, bright sun, as it was of old ;  
Red wine, loud mirth, gleaming of the gold ;  
Something yet awanting—how shall it be told ?  
*Love, Love, Love, the whiteness of the snow ;*  
*Love, Love, Love, and the days of long ago.*

“Large heart, true love, service void of sound,  
Life trust, death trust, here on English ground,  
As in olden story, surely have we found !  
*Love, Love, Love, the whiteness of the snow ;*  
*Love, Love, Love, and the days of long ago.”*

1884-5.

MY POETESS'S POEM.

My poetess ! whose verses  
Are those pure thoughts of thine,  
Whose loyal heart converses  
In words too sweet for rhyme—

I felt thy love this morning  
Come o'er me at my prayer ;  
It needed not adorning,  
Nor words to make it fair.

For did I not remember  
The pure His face shall see,  
And God in thy heart's chamber  
Dwelleth eternally.

And if the words thou sayest  
Shame my poor poet's art,  
How wondrous when thou prayest  
The poems of thine heart.

For somewhere near the flashing  
Of clear green northern seas,  
Thou listenest their dashing,  
And writest words like these :

## I.

“ Far art thou, O belovèd,  
Who art mine own right hand ;  
Thou canst not share the beauty  
Of thine own Scottish land ;  
Thou canst not hear the love-names  
On the mountains where thou art,  
*Like everlasting music*  
*That run within my heart.*

## 2.

“ These sunbeams bring no joyance,  
Because they light not thee ;  
Most sad, O heart's affiance,  
Is all the sunbright sea.  
Yet spite of waves and mountains  
Our lonely hands that part,  
*Like everlasting music*  
*Thy love runs in my heart.*

## 3.

“ Each day and night there floweth  
The salt tide to the land,

And twice a day it goeth  
Back o'er the waste sea-sand ;  
So with a steady current,  
And by a faithful chart,  
*Like everlasting music*  
*Thy love runs in my heart.*

## 4.

“Lo ! thou dost hear the wonder  
Of God's voice on the hill,  
The icefall's thrilling thunder,  
The after silence still !  
Canst hear in that great silence  
That falleth where thou art,  
*The low sound of the music*  
*That runneth in my heart ?*

## 5.

“Canst thou, O heart's beloved,  
Hear evermore the chords ?  
Canst feel that thou art lovèd  
Above all force of words ?  
And canst thou hear the message  
I send thee where thou art—  
*Like everlasting music*  
*Thy love runs in my heart ?”*

RIFFEL, VALAIS,  
August 8, 1884.

THAT NOT IMPOSSIBLE SHE.

Lo, in the spring weather,  
Bonnet of dainty size,  
Queen-like, tiara-wise,  
Just underneath her  
Red gipsy feather.

Down let the eyes go,  
Following the fineness,  
The subtle divineness,  
The perfection of dressing,  
That defines, unexpressing,  
Her maidenly figure.

Wind that so fierce doth blow—  
Blustering weather,  
Soften thy rigour,  
Thy boisterous vigour  
Flee to the hills of the  
Young mountain heather,  
Ruffle the rills of the  
Still upland valleys ;

Cease thy wild sallies,  
 Thy vehement gesture ;  
 Soft as Ariel's winglet  
 Caress thou each ringlet,  
 Each fold of her vesture ;

Thy rude blowing soften,  
 See that thy freaks of  
     Turbulent playing  
 Freshen, not roughen  
 The meadow-sweet cheeks of  
 This maid who goes Maying  
 In gracefuller guise than a  
     Goddess Diana !

See the ring on her finger,  
     Glove-hidden, dainty !  
 Why will ye linger,  
     Maids sweet and twenty ?  
 None hath design'd such a  
     Charming hand wringer ;  
 Haste ye, and find such a  
     Ring for your finger !

Wind that doth bless her too,  
     Blowing so faintly,  
 Thou dost confess her too  
     Queenly and saintly ;  
 Now shall I kiss her too,  
     Ever so gently.

## THE YOUNG THINGS IN THINE EYES.

IN the hawthorn arbour out on the green,  
Withdrawn from the people's view,  
A man and a maid awhile have been ;  
That is to say—*we two !*

The world is fair all round about,  
The sky is blue to-day ;  
On the southward wall are the roses out,  
And the month is the month of May.

The blossoms above are rosily bright ;  
But the shadows are blue and fine,  
Where the hawthorn red and the hawthorn white,  
Most lovingly intertwine.

We two are as close as the red and the white—  
'Tis as pleasant here as there ;  
And the mad cap dance of the leaf-sieved light  
Never lit on a happier pair.

But yet of the fair things far and near,  
I think that the fairest lies  
Hid in a fringed tent, my dear,  
'Neath the lids of thy sweet eyes.

The rarest of all is never seen  
By folk in the city whirl,  
But in secret bower like the Fairy Queen  
Hides the sweet rare heart of a girl.

There's a lambent light in the still sea deeps  
Of a sunless paradise ;  
But I love the tender dew that steeps  
The babies in thine eyes.

O small young things of the unknown tongue,  
Whose tale I know so well,  
Like a chant by unseen angels sung  
Are the words ye come to tell.

Ye sweet twin babies, in years how old  
Were ye in the land above,  
And what angel touch'd your heads with gold,  
And your baby lips with love ?

"O ye," they say, "who are living your life,  
We two shall never grow old,  
But shall babies be, when husband and wife,  
Ye are drawing anear the fold.

“ Let the love that keeps us young and warm  
     Live in your hearts so true,  
 That peace may banish the fear of harm  
     While we are abiding with you.”

This is the story their silence tells  
     To my heart this summer day,  
 That shall ring like the pleasant sound of bells  
     When the world is well away.

When we meet at morn by the summer sea,  
     When we part in the moonlight pale,  
 Never old or cold shall the babies be,  
     Nor ever their smiling fail.

So keep we bright, betide what may,  
     The light in their eyes, my dove,  
 That sweet and pure they may shine for aye,  
     Those innocent babies of love.

Lo, here in the arbour out on the green  
     Where awhile there sat *we two*,  
 Neath the hawthorn blossom four have been—  
     The babies—and I—and you !

### O LEMAN LAKE.

O LEMAN Lake, dear Lemman Lake,  
Thy beauty knows no change ;  
In thee the Savoy Alps still make  
A double mountain range.

All round the shores of Lemman Lake  
Shineth the early dew ;  
Outstanding lines of poplar break  
Thy plain of steadfast blue.

O'er Territet and Chillon's keep  
No faintest zephyrs blow ;  
And terrac'd Vevey lies asleep,  
With vine-stocks all a-row.

Crimson and glorious morning gold  
Deck every vineyard wall ;  
The grapes within their sunny fold  
Hang ripe and purple all.

There in the blue, Rhone pushes out  
His snow-fed waters grey ;  
And there with walnuts girt about  
Lies little Bouveret.

At Evian, lo, the flag of France  
Wooeth the breezes coy,  
And through the pines comes furious Drance  
White from the High Savoy.

While over all doth brood the light  
So dear to Lemman Lake,  
That glimmer of diffus'd delight  
The lawny cloudlets make.

Of old, beneath a sky like this  
Love grew and hate was bred ;  
And still to-day the lovers kiss,  
And still they mourn the dead.

'Tis long ago since mourner's foot  
Climb'd Jaman's weary road ;  
Yet exile still is bitter fruit,  
And heavy still its load.

But, Love, when we together go,  
And thy hand holdeth mine,  
How limpid Lemman's waves will flow,  
How soft the sun will shine !

How the far snows will draw us on,  
The Valais snows I know,  
On which the morning sunshine shone  
Many an hour ago.

Yet fair these vineyards round my door,  
Fair this blue inland sea,  
Since some one on another shore  
Liveth and loveth me.

How much more fair when her sweet eyes  
Lake Lemman's peace shall see,  
And all the pleasant land that lies  
'Twixt France and Italy.

## IDYLL OF THE HAYFIELD.

*HEY for the haymaking weather !  
Hey for the meadows green !  
Scythemen all swinging together,  
Swish of the blades so keen.*

There go the ranks of the mowers,  
Sweeping the swathes behind,  
Bending as tall meadow flowers  
Bend in a westerly wind.

To the east their heads are inclining  
For a last strong kiss from the sun,  
And a draught of his early shining  
Just once ere their life is done.

Dragon-flies hover and shiver  
Over the gnat-haunted pool ;  
Cows are knee-deep in the river,  
Flicking the flies in the cool

Stridently down in the meadow  
Stone upon steel is laid ;  
Down where the grass is in shadow  
Some one is sharpening his blade ;

*With hey for the haymaking weather !  
Hey for the meadows green !  
Scythemen all swinging together,  
Swish of the blades so keen.*

Here come the haymaking lasses,  
Bonneted safe from the sun,  
Merrily tossing the grasses,  
Wild roses every one.

Brown are their faces haymaking,  
Bright as this summer's day ;  
Strong are the arms that are raking  
And shaking the new-mown hay.

Rare is the haymaking weather,  
Strong with the strength of June ;  
Lasses and lads together,  
Sing to a haymaking tune.

Singing and swinging and bringing  
Hay from the meadows green,  
Maying and playing and haying,  
All are most pleasant, I ween.

All in the haymaking weather,  
Lumbering along the ways,  
The wains in a row together  
Creak home in the longest days,

*With hey for the haymaking weather !  
Hey for the meadows green !  
Scythemen all swinging together,  
Swish of the blades so keen.*

Rattling and battering and clattering,  
The hay waggons cumber the road ;  
Rustling and hustling and bustling,  
The hay-mow swallows the load.

But somehow the haymaking riot  
Dies into silence soon,  
For I am possessed with the quiet  
And drowse of the afternoon.

And in the dim hay-loft, a-glimmer  
With motes in the slant sunbeam,  
If the world gets dimmer and dimmer  
Who shall chide if I sleep and dream,

*Of the lazy haymaking weather,  
The drowsy meadows green,  
Scythemen all swinging together,  
Swish of the blades so keen ?*

I CANNOT SEND THEE GOLD.

I CANNOT send thee gold  
Nor silver for a show ;  
Nor are there jewels sold  
One half so dear as thou.

No daffodil doth blow  
In this dull winter time,  
Nor purple violet grow  
In so unkind a clime.

To-day I have not got  
One spray of meadow-sweet,  
Nor blue forget-me-not  
My posy to complete.

Yet none of these can claim  
So much goodwill as you ;  
Their lips put not to shame  
Cowslip and oxlip too.

But joy I'll take in this,  
Pleasure more sweet than all,  
If thou this book but kiss  
As Love's memorial.

1883.

## O HEART'S DELIGHT.

### I.

O HEART'S Delight, on whose love-lorn grey eyes  
And sweet red carven lips a dower of pain  
Weighs heavily to-day—dumb sorrow lies  
So close about thine heart, thou canst not gain  
The wreath of joy that is sad sorrow's crown.  
Ah, love, thine eyes pursue me ! look they thus  
Heavy with tears that will not fall adown,  
Drowned in a waveless sorrow ? Unto us  
Parting is not mere loosing of two hands,  
Or murmuring of good-byes ;  
But twaining souls, and breaking body bands,  
And silencing life's sweetest harmonies.

### II.

Do I not know the ache in thy sick heart,  
As on thine empty palm thy fingers close ;

And these thy lips, that feel the March winds' smart  
Miss sore the kiss whose sweetness no one knows ?  
Yea, love, my love, this wind is bitter cold ;  
About thee draw thy shawl's soft fold azure,  
And in thy bosom's screen'd recess withhold  
Thy maiden flower of love, all fair and pure ;  
For we have lost but what our eyes have seen,  
Yet kept securely all  
Love's country still untroubled and serene,  
And closer drawn our union mystical.

## III.

I linger by the fen's uncertain edge,  
And watch last year's tall tufted rushes sway,  
And the dry pennons of the rustling sedge  
On either side the long dim waterway.  
The moor-birds call responsively, and sweep  
In viewless circles, wailing as they go ;  
And in the distant pasture-lands the sheep  
To their own lambs bleat plaintively and low.  
All is most cool and still, when suddenly  
A low sweet murmur fills  
My pulses like the springtide from the sea—  
“ *Thine I am now, and all thine when God wills.*”

## IV.

Then golden grows the sudden pall of dark,  
For a fair head lies on my breast, and all  
The grim world's grief and troublous daily cark  
Into the night's concave doth noiseless fall,  
And dear arms cling about mine aching head,  
And from that soft touch pain and trouble fly ;  
The heart's long weary ache is comforted  
By touch of lips, the sweetest under sky.  
Ah, Heart's Delight, is any love like our's,  
Making dull absence seem  
Like Presence' self, whose sacred bond empowers  
Our souls to meet in world-forgetting dream ?

## V.

Doth not the northern wind bring fitfully  
Imagined sense of sweet from a far land  
Unto this marge of lazy southern sea ?  
Nay, too remote are brown flint-strewn sea sand,  
And wistful sighing pines high on the down ;  
These golden belts that ring the forest ways,  
Green bayonnetted gorse and heather brown,  
Too distant from yon drifted city haze,  
And bursting blossoms of a slower spring.  
No winds that wandering go  
Can wafts of fragrance from the nor'land bring  
To this clear loneliness of morning glow.

## VI.

As unkiss'd mountains, underneath the star  
Of sunless January, hunger for  
The sungod's horses and his flaming car ;  
As on the waste wide sand-dunes by the shore  
Lieth all night and longeth for the tide,  
A stranger from the waste wide sea ;  
Or as the ocean's self, unglorified  
By sun or moon, swayeth so wistfully  
'Twixt sad sea wave and sadder interval ;—  
So uncheered darkness lies  
Close round my soul, until there break through all,  
The shadowy radiance of thy twilight eyes.

## VII.

O mellow rain upon the clover tops ;  
O breath of morning blown o'er meadow-sweet ;  
Lush apple blooms, from which the wild bee drops  
Inebriate ; O hayfield scents, my feet  
Scatter abroad some morning in July ;  
O wild-wood odours of the birch and pine,  
And heather breaths from great red hill-tops nigh,  
Than olive sweeter, or Sicilian vine ;—  
Not all of you, nor summer lands of balm,  
Not blest Arabia,  
Nor coral isles in seas of tropic calm,  
All Heart's Desire unto my heart can draw.

## VIII.

O scent of sea on dreaming April morn,  
    Borne landward on a steady blowing wind ;  
O August breeze, o'er leagues of rustling corn,  
    Wafts of clear air from uplands left behind,  
And outbreath'd sweetness of wet wallflower bed ;  
    O set in Mid-May depth of orchard close,  
Tender germander blue, geranium red ;  
    O express'd freshness of sweet briar rose ;—  
Too gross, corporeal, absolute are ye !  
    Ye help not to define  
    That subtle fragrance, delicate and free,  
    Which like a vesture clothes this love of mine.

## THE MIDNIGHT OF THE YEAR.

AGAINST the pane I press my brow,  
And wonder in the midnight cold  
What time of year is with us now—  
Not yet the New, nor quite the Old.

No wind doth stir ; it is so still  
That I can hear a mile away  
An outlaw dog upon the hill  
Pursue with pain his swift-foot prey.

So dark, I hardly see the ash  
Against the sky uplift its arms ;  
But far away the watch-lights flash  
In solitary upland farms.

Behind, the fire hath wan'd to red,  
And one by one the embers fade ;  
While dimly shineth by my bed  
The lamp beneath its tripled shade.

Though through the dark no bells have peal'd,  
Jarring the air with brazen might,  
Not all forsaken is the field,  
Nor tenantless the year's midnight.

Across the silent plain of air  
Stalk four and twenty silent ghosts—  
The phantoms of my years that were,  
Dead in the drear December frosts.

And yet I fear them not—they come,  
Nor shall their race till doomsday fail ;  
They go, the units in my sum,  
If long or short be then my tale.

Why should I fear ? They bring me joy  
And grief in almost equal store.  
Ah ! should not then each year enjoy  
Grateful acceptance more and more.

Why should I fear, if in the field  
In the sweet spring I sow the corn,  
Into my barns to store the yield  
Ere unto midnight turns the morn ?

I think that surely that dear grace  
Which to my life our Lord did lend,  
Will make the ghosts a happier race  
I turn adrift at the year's end.

'Tis now the New Year on the earth ;  
And to a maiden in the south  
I call amid her festal mirth,  
And bend to kiss her sweet-set mouth.

My girl, I could not love thee more  
Wert thou my weddèd wife yestreen,  
Or did we hearken at our door  
The bells divide the midnight keen.

Yet though thou seemest half divine,  
A flower from Heaven's garden sent,  
One day thou shalt be wholly mine  
In the sweet land of Well-Content.

Though now the flowers all hidden are,  
The lilies sunken in the mere,  
Thine heart is treasure sweeter far  
Than all the gardens of the year.

EVEN SONG.

IN the even sings the voice,  
Soft and slow,  
Of the maiden of my choice :  
Very low  
Singeth she  
Ballads mystic, carols old,  
Fragments graceful, sweet, or bold,  
All for me.

Bliss of love's full thoughtedness  
Swift doth rise ;  
Haze of unforgetfulness  
Dims mine eyes ;  
And I see  
Precious hopes and bitter fears  
Down the vista of the years  
That shall be.

Thou and I shall ever cling  
    Yet more near,  
And the darkness shall us bring  
    Naught to fear ;  
    We shall go  
Ringed by evil tongues of spite,  
Shapes that wander in the night  
    To and fro.

Through the darkness and the noise  
    Lo, I hear  
Thrilling upward a sweet voice ;  
    In mine ear  
    Doth its tone  
Tell me all I yearn to know  
Up the world-way as I go  
    Not alone.

## LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE.

SINCE I have loved my love  
A year or so,  
What have I done to prove  
My love doth grow  
From less to more ?

Since I have seen her grace  
Make glad the home,  
Sweeten the household ways,  
Hath it become  
A richer store ?

Lo ! I have marked her face  
Men's eyes enthrall—  
Fairest in every place,  
Yet she through all  
Was still my maid.

Love I her less or more  
That I have seen

And learn'd her deep love lore,  
And with her been  
Through shine and shade?

Can it be less, when I,  
In awe and fear,  
Have stood her white soul nigh  
As it drew near  
And talked with God?

Aye, more a thousand fold  
My love hath grown,  
Older yet never old,  
Good seed well sown  
In fruitful sod.

As knowledge grows in me  
Love keeps the pace ;  
And never may'st thou see  
One win the race  
Nor lag behind.

Love keepeth that fair land  
Knowledge hath won,  
And these two hand in hand  
Till set of sun  
Thou still shalt find.

## BY THE SEA.

THE peace of waveless rest is on the sea.  
I hear no sound, albeit I listen till  
Ears ache with silentness and silence' self  
Becomes a sound—only the hidden sough  
Of hill-brook yearning towards the primal sea,  
Wearied of granite hills and clefted glens.

Peace in my tired heart even as I watch  
The surge of hills serrate against the sky,  
Emulous of the steady polar star ;

For this my love is with me and her voice  
Dwells in mine ear, and in my central heart  
The memory of To-day is throbbing strong.

I feel her blissful kiss upon my lips  
Say "*Benedicite*." My soul goes home  
That way, as a belated bird, aweary,  
Nestles at last by his homekeeping mate.

'Tis she and I against the whelming world ;  
All else falls back—scarce to be wondered at—  
Faintly at most, hardly of interest

Sufficient for a question, but as one  
Might say, "What ship is that whose pulsing wheels  
We hear out there i' the west?" And yet withal  
As meaningless to me as a dog's howl  
Far heard at dead of night when no wind blows.

That is her casement's narrow vacant square.  
Lo, see, a light shines from it, and I know  
All joy within ; without, the empty air,  
And the unfriendly sea and I alone.

But in the west I see Love's planet sweet,  
Regnant above the everlasting hills ;  
And then, with heart love-heavy, home I go.

“THERE WAS AE FLOUR.”

THERE was ae flour in a fair garden,  
*Where the lilac blossom blooms cheerily ;*  
“ Fairest and rarest ever was seen,”  
*Sing the merle and laverock merrily.*

Watered o’ dew i’ the earliest morn,  
*Lilac blossom blooms cheerily ;*  
Bield about wi’ a sweet hawthorn,  
*Where the merle and lark sing merrily.*

Wha will pu’ this flour o’ the flours ?  
*Lilac blossom blooms cheerily ;*  
Wha hae for aye to grace their bours  
*Where the merle and lark sing merrily ?*

COR CORDIUM.

IN old sad days when I withdrew me  
To watch thee from afar,  
Thou wast a goddess fair unto me,  
But distant as they are.

From earthy dross mine ore refining,  
I felt thy clear eyes draw  
Truth's minted gold, and their still shining  
Bind all men to their law—

A law as pure as white lake lilies,  
But cold as snow is cold;  
The gold hearts of the daffodillies  
Seem'd more of love to hold.

And yet each one that knows thee knoweth  
That strange sweet power of thine,  
To make man's heart a fire that gloweth  
Fiercer than furnace shine.

Thou art no goddess, but a maiden  
Whom God hath made too fair ;  
Thou comest to a heart deep laden  
Like soft sea-scented air.

When in the darkness I remember  
Thee smile with quiet eyes,  
The winter midnight of December  
On a May morn doth rise.

'Tis long ago since thou hast taken  
The sleeping love in me,  
And made my whole life to awaken  
To one sole thought of thee.

And now to thee, my life's liege lady,  
What good gift can I bring ?  
Is not my whole heart's treasure ready  
To be mine offering ?

Yea, all of old to maiden given  
Thy knight shall give to thee,  
Though now most rare on this side heaven,  
Love, worship, fealty.

### WEALTH OF ROSES.

WEALTH of roses hast thou sent,  
Lying bright,  
All in mellow osier pent,  
Red and white.

Blue forget-me-nots, the best  
Thou did'st send—  
Fern encircled, dew caress'd,  
O my friend !

Sent too, store of garden grace,  
Cultured sweets—  
Guardian Dryads of the place,  
Marguerites ;

Bringing wafts of country air  
To my rooms,  
Shaming all my foolish care,  
And my glooms.

Words are all I can return  
For thy grace ;  
Yet thy love shall surely earn  
Happy days.

1883.

## LOVE LIETH LOWLY.

A NEW SONG TO AN OLD TUNE.

Low in the morning, Love lieth weeping,  
Wayworn and weary, ready to die ;  
All his bright arrows gone from his keeping,  
Broken his pinions—how shall he fly ?  
Through his fair ringlets rough winds are sweeping,  
Low his head in the dust doth lie.

*Maidens, sing this sad song slowly,  
“ Love’s head lieth lowly.”*

They have forgotten, all the gay rovers,  
Gifts that he gave them summers ago ;  
All of them gone now, half-hearted lovers,  
Fair weather friends in the winter that go.  
Cold is the raiment young Love that covers—  
Woven webs of the drifted snow.

*Maidens, sing this sad song slowly,  
“ Love’s head lieth lowly.”*

---

Through the white snow-wreath cometh a maiden,  
Up in her arms she taketh the boy.  
See the soft mantle Love is arrayed in,  
Never again to suffer annoy ;  
Unto her house she goeth Love-laden,  
Holding Love in her heart of joy.  
*Sing no more a sad song slowly,  
Love's head lies not lowly.*

### A YEAR TO-NIGHT.

To-NIGHT I touched thy hand, my dear,  
In the dead winter of the year ;  
To-night saw first eyes grey and clear,  
A year ago.

Only a year ! but if it were  
Ten ages more, could it transfer  
Or alter by a single hair  
This love we know ?

To-night into my life there came  
Of Love and Faith the equal flame ;  
My very soul was not the same  
A year ago.

And yet our spirits met, I wot,  
In some prenatal field of thought—  
Clasp'd hands, and then a while forgot  
On earth below.

---

Didst thou recall a lifetime spent  
In mutual knowledge well content,  
When all thy soul to mine outwent  
A year ago?

I think that in the treasure-house  
Whence souls are taken, God allows  
Each unborn soul to choose a spouse  
And forth to go.

But sometimes in the crowded mart  
The wedded pair are torn apart—  
'Twas well I knew whose twin thou wert  
A year ago!

## OUR LADY OF THE WOODS.

I WILL show you a tree on the edge of the wood,  
At its foot the lady fern breaketh in spray,  
And ten times a day it changeth its mood,  
Like a wayward maiden, grave or gay.

Aye, our birch is a beauty—I wonder now  
If you would think it was like a girl—  
Lissom and graceful, a girl we know?

Well, you never *had* any eyes ; a pearl  
Might lie a long time in an oyster for you,  
Unless it should stick in your Philistine throat !

Oh, you "*see what I'm driving at now*," you do,  
And you ask, "*What resemblance are you to note ?*"

First, then, you may mark the grace of its curve,  
And the subtle spring of the airy top,  
All instinct with life to each delicate nerve,  
And in each curl'd leaf a crystalline drop,  
That sprinkles your face as you brush it aside—  
Then that springtime scent in the morning air  
Makes you stay unawares the swing of your stride,  
And take time to admire my beauty there.

Can you see it now? at the fir-wood's end,  
You'll catch its gleam like a fairy's wand,  
Grey and clear like the eyes of my friend.

It is ringed with purple and delicate band  
Of russet and brown and marvellous grey,  
And one gets, here and there on its silvery stem,  
Wherever the bark has curl'd away,  
Shy glimpse of a dainty underhem.

But I cannot see it—it stood just here—  
What is this? Our birch—in a wrack of trees!  
It must have gone with the storm of last year  
That swept so strong from the western seas  
And wasted the country side. Well, it must be so;  
But yet while my Dryad remaineth to me,  
This storm-racked year, it is joy to know,  
Brought a love that is better than flower or tree.

1884.

### NIGHT BY SUILVEN.

A WEEK ago I heard the hum  
Of Pleasure's languid multitude,  
Over the grass to where I stood  
From the gay park's long turmoil come.

A week ago I saw the glare  
Upon a hundred dancers fall ;  
I stood apart and watched it all,  
Nor found I aught in which to share.

Here morning draws to afternoon,  
And afternoon to eventide ;  
And now the shimmering cloudlets hide  
Intenser splendours of the moon.

But from her bonds she breaketh soon,  
And builds a fairy bridge of light,  
That marks a pathway shining bright  
Across the narrows of Loch Fewn.

The ripples break just out of reach—  
Beneath, the hasty river brawls ;  
And, softer than the Kirkaig falls,  
Whispers the wind too low for speech.

The lake lies underneath the hill,  
The hill scarce underneath the skies,  
So instant and abrupt doth rise  
Wierd Suilven's ancient pinnacle.

Here, then, 'tis passing good to bide,  
For dearer to the quiet mind  
Than fashion's festival, I find  
The hamlet by the sea-loch's side.

ASSYNT, SOUTHERLAND,

1881.

FROM TWO WINDOWS.

THIS window looketh toward the west,  
And o'er the meadows grey  
Glimmer the snows that coldly crest  
The hills of Galloway.

The winter broodeth all between—  
In every furrow lies ;  
Nor is there aught of summer green,  
Nor blue of summer skies.

Athwart the dark grey rainclouds flash  
The sea-bird's sweeping wings,  
And through the stark and ghostly ash  
The wind of winter sings.

The purple woods are dim with rain,  
The cornfields dank and bare ;  
And eyes that look for golden grain  
Find only stubble there.

---

But when I to the window turn  
That fronts the southern plain,  
Small sign of winter I discern,  
Or cloud-rack fierce with rain.

Sunshine is not more clear in June,  
Nor August sky more blue ;  
Not otherwise on summer noon  
Looketh our guardian yew.

And there in leafage never sere  
Stand all the solemn pines ;  
Nor fresher in the spring appear  
Their melancholy lines.

Dark green against the southern sky  
Their shaggy tops are seen ;  
The flooded meadow-levels lie  
All silver-grey between.

Thus light and dark and dark and light  
So near together come,  
That you may hold them both in sight  
From one small-window'd room.

But while I write, behold the night  
Comes slowly blotting all,  
And o'er grey waste and meadow bright  
The gloaming shadows fall.

From all the quiet lattices  
Dim lights are shining soon,  
And through the cross-bars of the trees  
Breaketh the wading moon.

1884.

## JUNE RAIN IN WALES.

GOLDENER than gold's clear self,  
Above the purpling mountain mass the sun  
Doth hang, mist-mellow in the even-shine ;  
Higher, the level curtain of the rain—  
Soft summer rain, that blesseth where it falls—  
Lets drop two sun-illumin'd folds of shower  
Over yon dim blue western promontory—  
The folk here call it Lleyn. Seen hence it seems  
A chain of islands like our Hebrides,  
Adream amid the rain-still'd northern sea.

And now, O love, as thy life circles mine,  
And thy dear influence, like the blessed rain,  
Stilleth and purifieth the sea's surge,  
So is the barren, lone, unquiet sea  
Bound by the bands of habitable land,  
Still'd by the gentle falling of the rain.

BELOW CADER IDRIS,

1884.

## A CHRISTMAS GREETING.

A GREETING kind to thee, my friend,  
To thee a blithe good-morrow ;  
And whatsoe'er He doth thee send,  
God send thee never sorrow.

For all good men this Christmas-tide,  
Good girls and they together,  
About the fire sit side by side  
To spite the winter weather.

The wind about the missel-bush  
Shakes every waxen berry ;  
And while it makes the maidens blush,  
It makes the men a-merry.

And while upon this pleasant earth  
Live men both good and jolly,  
I wot they'll save for Christmas mirth  
The yule-log and the holly.

And if for lack of city lore  
The verses seem but homely,  
I rede thee pardon them the more  
That thou thyself art comely.

1883.

## FALSE AND TRUE.

### I.

My soul, what doth this triple promise mean,  
This vow by men and angels heard,  
By God enregistered,  
To love, to honour, and to keep my Queen ?

Ah, many a pair before the altar kneel,  
To whom the sacred words that bless  
Are far more meaningless  
Than the hill-echo when their joy-bells peal.

### II.

I hear the woman's voice ring clear and true,  
With high heart-service in its tone,  
She gives to him alone  
Her store of all love's golden revenue—

To him who brings foul heart unpurified,  
Selfish and cruel as the grave,  
The false heart of the knave,  
To match the fair perfection of his bride.

## III.

Or shallow heart and selfish, giveth she,  
And thinketh to herself, "Behold,  
All things are got for gold,  
And wonderful shall my adorning be!"

Yet thinketh not, poor fool, that purity  
And truth are not yet bought for gold,  
And happiness not sold  
For all the wealth of regal argosy.

## IV.

My God, was this the marriage meant by Thee,  
This union of the foul and fair?  
Can such pollution bear  
Thine Eden stamp of love eternally?

And dost Thou smile approval from the skies,  
Or evil things of darkness leap,  
Where, in the glimmering deep,  
Dwelleth Beelzebub, the Prince of Flies?

Nay, no such marriage Thine, for Thou dost bless  
The Love and Truth and equal yoke,  
That bind Thy faithful folk  
By two and two in bands of stedfastness.

## v.

So Love is not lip-service, nor is Faith  
A fair-wind helmsman who can steer  
Only where skies are clear,  
But fainteth in the murky chasm of Death.

Therefore to love her ever is not hard—  
To love her *not*, as possible  
As that the ambient sea  
Should cease the precinct of our isle to guard.

## vi.

Like one who, half awaking in the dawn,  
And turning into well-known arms,  
Nestleth from reach of harms  
In that beloved haven safe withdrawn ;

So in the shelter of a mutual trust  
Shall we abide, and closer draw  
These sacred bonds, whose law  
Is Love undying, though ourselves be dust.

## A FAR CRY.

### FROM THE ALPS TO ARGYLE.

A FAIR far land about thee lies,  
Cool'd by the salt lake's breeze ;  
Thou see'st through great tear-clouded eyes  
The wash of Scottish seas.

With heart to Alpine snows anear,  
From some small hill church bare  
Thou liftest to the All-Father  
A maiden's simple prayer.

These thousand miles can not divide  
Thy well-belov'd from thee ;  
He hearkeneth, silent at thy side,  
The sea-waves' litany.

With thee he marks the white cloud caps  
Fleck all the sunlit land ;  
His feet, behind the ebb-tide's lapse,  
Make lightnings in the sand.

He hears, above the tinkling bells  
Of cattle pasturing  
High on the parchèd Alpine fells,  
The Inver church bells ring.

Steep slopes of dazzling sunlit snow,  
Cleaving the dark-blue sky ;  
Or Monte Rosa, all aglow,  
O'erhanging Italy,

Hide not these misty mountain tops  
Drench'd in cool drifts of rain,  
The brown-sailed fishing craft that drops  
Down to the western main.

For all the banners of the mist  
About the summits furl'd,  
The ledges by the sun first kiss'd,  
This cold white glacier world,

Not of themselves are loveliest,  
But by dear hopes that rise  
That all these things may one day rest  
In the Sabbath of thine eyes.

## LOVE IS THE TRUE GOLD.

HERE is fine gold for thee  
For thine adorning,  
Sent for the love of thee  
On Christ's birth morning.

Wear it for Faith's sake,  
For the work that bought it ;  
Wear it for my sake,  
And the love that thought it.

Love is the true gold,  
Richest of trover ;  
What is the wife's gold ?—  
Husband and lover !

OBER ENGADIN,  
1884.

## AMONG SEPTEMBER SNOW.

At home 'tis sunny September,  
Though here 'tis a waste of snows,  
So bleak that I scarce remember  
How the scythe through the cornland goes.

With an aching heart I wander  
Through the cold and curvèd wreaths,  
And dream that I see meander  
Brown burns amid purple heaths.

That I hear the stags on the mountains  
Bray loud in the early morn,  
And that scarlet gleams by the fountains  
The red-berried wild-rose thorn.

Very solemn the peaks of the Valais  
Through the broken storm-clouds show,  
By the sun made magically  
Whiter than whitest snow.

The dome of soaring Mischabel  
 Shines in a misty dream ;  
 The Weisshorn and pinnacled Gabel  
 Reign in the west supreme ;

While o'er the White Tooth and the Brothers  
 Ariseth, accursèd and lorn,  
 God's wedge that divided the others,  
 The marvellous Matterhorn.

Yet scarce can my hungry heart pardon  
 The mountains for being so fair ;  
 I had liefer behold a garden,  
 And a maiden that resteth there

All under a red thorn's shading,  
 A queen on a rustic throne—  
 And an English twilight fading  
 On the garden, not alone !

1884.

## A CHRISTMAS SONG FOR A LADY.

### I.

No song of lark nor blithesome bird  
About our winter land is heard,  
So I must tune no serious strain,  
Nor rack my brow for epics vain ;  
But while the snows are drifting white,  
In cosiest corner will I write  
Some dainty lines for a lady.

### II.

*" Goodwill to all who have goodwill,  
To him that hath be given still ! "*  
And he the angels' vision sees  
Through all the veiled centuries ;  
So weighty words are lightly said,  
As gold is wrought in daintiest braid  
In winsome wise for a lady.

III.

A song that bears no dirge of pain  
Rings out from English bells again,  
By shepherds heard beneath the fold,  
The glad old song that is not old ;  
And I, the echo it doth leave,  
Afar from English gladness weave  
In graceful guise for a lady.

IV.

To all to whom the cross is now  
The crown awaits the weary brow ;  
Like His, that babe whose wondrous birth,  
In Bethlehem made glad the earth ;  
And all my heart is glad, I wot—  
Or part is glad and part is not—  
As knoweth well this lady.

V.

For sad songs may be lightly sung,  
And gladsome harps on willows hung,  
And days are days and years are years,  
And joy lies near the spring of tears ;  
And so as bond for life-long debt,  
A thoughtful word or two I set  
In Christmas key for a lady.

MALOJA, UPPER ENGADINE,  
*Christmas, 1884.*

A WINTER MESSAGE FROM THE  
HIGH ALPS.

TO GEORGE MILNER.

To you, O friend, who keep a heart  
Unchilled by any snows ;  
To you from one who stands apart  
A spring of kindness flows.

From Alpine snows and granite rocks  
I reach revering hands,  
Warm with a gratitude that mocks  
These winter-buried lands.

I see you homeward slowly come  
And outside shut the day,  
Silence the city's dreary hum  
And put the world away.

And I that have no resting-place  
On hearth for foot of mine,  
Turn very wistfully my face  
To watch your hearth-fire shine.

And all my heart goes over seas,  
Though I stay here alone,  
To share its sweet observances  
And graceful duties done.

And with my hearth-fire all unmade,  
My home life yet to be,  
I sadly watch the sunset fade  
On purple Italy ;

Yet see above the glacier snow  
The full-orb'd promise rise ;  
And living love none else may know  
Shine from unfathom'd eyes.

HAST THOU SEEN? HAST THOU  
KNOWN ?

Hast thou seen the glamour that follows  
The falling of summer rain—  
The mystical blues in the hollows,  
The purples and greys on the plain ?

Hast thou seen the moonlight shining  
On the fair four cantons' sea,  
While all thy heart was pining  
For two eyes' still mystery ?

Hast thou known desire that groweth  
More wordless and fiercely calm,  
Fann'd by the wind that bloweth  
Soft from the lands of palm ?

How wilder than forests Etruscan,  
Sweeter than Lombard vines,  
Softer than vocables Tuscan  
Heard on the Appennines,

Is the faith that doth not vanish  
Under the glare of the day ;  
Faith that the night cannot banish—  
As deep as the Milky Way,

As clear with wonderful lustre,  
As far above earthly jars,  
As the Pleiades' glimmering cluster,  
The sweetest among the stars.

## NEW RHYME AND OLD REASON.

(WRITTEN IN LEWIS CARROL'S "RHYME? OR REASON?")

Low down among the summer grass,  
We two, a lover and his lass,  
List the old rhymes of "*breeze*," and "*trees*,"  
And the wind on the level meadow leas.

Dear old-time rhymes of "*love*" and "*dove*,"  
Heard in the branches high above,  
Never in days gone by were ye  
Sung of a love more fair than she.

Half sad, all glad, on this mad page  
I rhyme of a love, rhymes cannot gauge ;  
While wild rose leaves fall tenderly  
Over words that hide what Love can be.

JUNE 14, 1884.

### SONG FOR BRIDE-DAY MORNING.

*WHITE as early roses, girt by daffodillies,  
Gleam the feet of maidens, moving rhythmically,  
Roses of the mountains, flowers of the valley,  
Hill rose and plain rose and white vale lilies.*

Dewy in the meadow lands, clover blossoms mellow  
Lift their heads of red and white to the bride's adorning;  
Sweetly in the sky-realms all the summer morning,  
Joyeth the skylark and calleth his fellow.

In the well-known precincts, lo the wilding treasure  
Glow for marriage merriment in my sweetheart's  
gardens,  
Welcoming her joy-day, tenderest of wardens—  
Heart's pride and love's life and all eyes' pleasure.

Bride among the bridesmaids, lily clad in whiteness,  
She cometh to the twining none may twain in sunder;  
While to marriage merriment wakes the organ's thunder,  
And the Lord doth give us all His heavenly brightness.

*Then like early roses, girt by daffodillies  
Goes the troop of maidens, moving rhythmically,  
Roses of the mountains, flowers of the valley,  
Hill rose and plain rose and white vale lilies.*

1884.

## FORGET AND REMEMBER.

THE March wind piercing keen,  
Scourging the white highways,  
Parching the springing green—  
These fitful vexing days,  
O love, do thou forget.

Days of clear sky above  
And spring flowers underfoot,  
The bursting bud of Love,  
And promise of Love's fruit,  
Remember thou, O love.

Cold days of clouded sky,  
And hours of shadowed heart,  
When one would vainly try  
Awhile to stay apart,  
Do thou, O love, forget.

The gold without alloy  
Of Faith and Love supreme,

The pure unsullied joy  
In waking or in dream,  
O love, remember thou.

The fear of others' thought,  
The hardly brooked restraint,  
A passing strangeness wrought  
By pride's unkindly taint,  
O love, do thou forget.

Those eyes from which shone out  
The utter trust of each,  
That inner joy no doubt  
Or surface storm can reach,  
Remember thou, O love.

Though Memory's wells o'erflow  
With undrawn draughts of joy,  
Most hard 'tis now to know  
What moths did us annoy—  
So, love, do thou forget.

But love of sacred days,  
Sweet rest beneath one roof,  
Two hearts one song of praise,  
Love, of God's love the proof,  
O love, remember thou.

All that thou wouldst not let  
Come near our own bright hearth,  
O love, do thou forget !  
A love like heaven on earth,  
O love, remember thou !

1885.

A TRANSCRIPT FROM THE "SONG OF  
SONGS."

THE MAID.

I.

BETTER than cup of fine gold from the south  
Fill'd with wine's treasure-trove,  
Are these thy lips. So kiss me, love,  
O kiss me, with the kisses of thy mouth.

2.

Behold, the damsels love thee, O belovèd,  
Because thy name is fair,  
And of sweet odour, like the air  
Of delicate nard that clings about thy head.

3.

Draw us, thou strong one, for our hearts incline  
To thee. Within his hall  
The king hath brought me ; but *thy* call  
I'll follow, for thy love is more than wine.

4.

Most true, O daughters of the hill of Zion,  
No maiden lily white  
Am I ; yet comelier in his sight  
Than Kedar's tents, curtains of Solomon.

5.

I kept my brethren's vines though I was fair,  
For hot their anger was —  
Ah ! look not on me— for, alas !  
Of mine own vineyard have I had no care.

6.

Tell me, O thou for whom my soul hath love,  
Where feeds thy flock ? at noon  
Where rests ? for why should I as one  
Lone and forgot, among thy fellows rove.

CHORUS.

If this thy good thou wilt not know,  
Thou all too simple maid,  
Afar among the rocks  
Feed thou thy flocks ;  
By the low earthen cotes  
Where shepherds tend their goats,  
By hill and hollow  
The sheep-track follow ;  
And in queen's raiment be no more arrayed.

THE KING.

I.

Unto my charger  
Lo I compare thee,  
Chief of the horses  
Southward that bare thee,  
Guarded and warded,  
Girt round by heroes,  
In my state chariot,  
Gift of the Pharaohs.

2.

Comely thy cheeks are,  
Jewels adorn them ;  
Chains on thy fair neck,  
There thou hast worn them ;  
Chains the king gave thee,  
His goldsmiths made them,  
Studded with bell-tassels,  
Silversmiths weighed them.

THE MAID.

I.

While yet the king sat in his banquet hall  
My spikenard scented sweet,  
And I was glad ; but when his feet  
Drew near, drooping it hung and scentless all.

2.

To me a bunch of pleasant myrrh thou art,  
My well-beloved, that rests,  
Lying all night between my breasts  
Stirr'd by the love-sick pulses of my heart.

3.

"To what is my belovèd like," say I,  
"In whom I take delight?"  
A spray of henna, red and white,  
Among the vines in sunny Engedi.

1882.

AFTER CLOUD THE SUNSHINE.

I.

QUIET are the woods, and dumb  
Are the wood-dove's notes ;  
Honey-bees have hush'd their hum,  
Birds their merry throats.

Blossoms of the orchard trees,  
Nipp'd by morning frost,  
Flutter on the bitter breeze,  
Life and freshness lost.

Dust doth dim the yellow gold  
Of the wayside gorse ;  
Harebells droop upon the wold,  
Spring hath lost her force.

Stay'd the first glad burst of power,  
Check'd the mounting sap ;  
Sweetheart Spring herself doth cower  
In Dame Winter's lap.

II.

Beating down the crested waves  
On the great sea plain,  
Over fields and towns and graves,  
Drives the welcome rain.

All the chill and listless leaves,  
Feeble frosted folk,  
Sudden smiting tempest reaves  
From the creaking oak.

O'er the garden ways are strown  
Spring's untimely wrack ;  
Leaves and flowers and branches blown  
Line the forest track.

III.

This is how the summer came,  
Came with bursting hail,  
Racking thunder, instant flame,  
Fierce Atlantic gale.

Yesterday 'twas doubtful spring,  
Heaven of arid grey ;  
Day of storm doth summer bring,  
Lo ! 'tis June to-day.

Here to-day is summer's prime,  
New joy in the trees ;  
Sapphire-hearted summer time,  
Sky, and bluer seas.

1885.

# HARRY OWEN'S BOOK,

BEING

## POET ECHOES

IN

## WILD WALES.

*"Blow bugle, answer echoes."*

[Written in days of rain for the Inn Album at Pen-y-Gwryd, in North Wales, to supply spaces left unfilled by certain poets who of late sojourned there—the Prophet of the Lamentation, the Clerk of Oxenford, the Incomprehensible, the Lordly One, the Democrat of the Earthly Paradise, the Master, the Protean Celt, and the Demoniac Clothed.]

## HARRY OWEN'S BOOK.

"I came to Pen-y-Gwryd, a-larking with my betters,  
A mad wag and mad poet, both of them men of letters,  
Which two ungrateful parties, for the care of them I took,  
Have set me writing verses in Henry Owen's book."

T. HUGHES.

Pen-y-Gwryd, Caernarvonshire.



## THIRTY YEARS.

"A voice shall cry in the latter days."

I HAVE not looked for thirty years  
Upon thy humble roof, mine inn ;  
Yet, though my voice has tuned the spheres,  
I rest in thee with no disdain.

When in the school's familiar hum,  
The little pontiffs watch my nod,  
How often doth the whisper come,  
"How sweet to tread the Cambrian sod."

Ah, thirty years ! how much they change,  
Besides the unquiet heart of man !  
How many ghosts through Hades range,  
Who walk'd the earth when ye began.

There were no flakes upon these locks,  
No crafty crowsfeet round mine eyes,  
My phrases pointed not the jokes  
Of editors more smart than wise.

No church anathemas were hurl'd,  
Unheard were then Philistia's jeers—  
Ah me ! what changes have the world  
And I not seen in thirty years.

But here no sickening discord stills  
The music of the steady stars ;  
The winds upon the moon-blanch'd hills  
Joy not in theologic wars.

And in the freedom of mine inn,  
I should not wonder if I am  
A trifle nearer to my kin,  
Than isled in esoteric calm.

But still the greatest thoughts are hid  
And nurtured by the reverent few ;  
By frantic shriek the mass is led,  
Though I in peace possess the true.

Yet though they seek not what I sought,  
With joy a younger people hears,  
What wisdom it hath been my lot  
To reach through pain in thirty years.

## FORMOSA ACERRIMAQUE.

BY CATULLUS OXONIENSIS.

O SWEETEST of sad maids,  
Saddest of sweet maids,  
    Euphrosyne's daughter !  
In peinture I limn thee,  
In poesy hymn thee,  
    Beloved of Erato !

Dionysian plethora  
Pour from the amphora,  
    Sweet Welsh Ganymede ;  
And thou'lt have a lyric—  
A chaunt neoteric,  
    By a poet indeed.

Hail, gracefulest Hebe,  
Whoever you may be !  
    My heart thou hast charmèd  
Far more than the classic  
Outpourer of Massic,  
    Horatian barmaid.

In my memory rankles  
The turn of thine ankles,  
    As thou pourest the nectar ;  
Not that I need to  
Pay any need to  
    Propriety's lecture.

For that angry eyelash down  
As thou countest the cash down,  
    Tell me too plainly  
Of what I'd a notion—  
Thou scorn'st my devotion,  
    And I sigh for thee vainly !

Thou call'st me "a mere swell,"  
Say'st "thou'lt box my ears well"—  
    "Thou need'st no protector,  
Thyself art sufficient,  
Extremely efficient,  
    Mad poet ejector !"

## BROWNNOROTTO'S DISTEMPER,

*And how it worked him.*

## I.

SHAKE fists, O Harry Owen !

(Not i' my face, *that's* not the place--*I'm not a fool, I'll not keep cool)*

Egad ! thy missus too ?

Who's that halloin' ?

What is all this to-do ?

## 2.

A pack o' pleasure-goers ?

Con-found their hunger din !

Ho ! kick 'em out o' doors,

Why ever let 'em in ?

O heavens and earth defend us

From this ingens—horrendus—

Confound—infer—tremendous—

Demon—terrif—stupendous—

And diabolic roar !

## 3.

Is peace an empty matter?  
Or art thou so much fatter  
Thou art from nerves exempt?  
Ho, Harry, make a sally  
(*Most obvious rime is alley*)  
Ere they have time to rally,  
Go heave 'em down the valley!

## 4.

What! treat 'em with contempt,  
Say'st thou? Do th' deed myself!  
Bah! Think'st thou a Poet's hands  
Are under thy commands  
To wash thy kitchen delf?  
Bah! ha!—— and pshaw.

## 5.

Ichabod! Ichabod!  
It's very odd—very odd—  
What! can it be my Roland?  
Mine Oliver's own Roland,  
I thought thee under sod  
In Florence wast, or Poland?

## 6.

Come to a Poet's arms !

What ! scornest mine embrace ?

Base elf, what counter charms

Can from thy soul efface

A Poet's AVATAR ?

" *True counter charms !* " say'st thou,

" *Spirits !* " mutter'st—" *the bar !* "

So like a flash of wonder wrought

The instant answer echoed thought—

" *Hail, Missus Owen, do*

*Bring glasses quick for two !* "

## THE PENALTY OF GREATNESS.

WITH a vile pen, in Harry Owen's book  
I write at random, thus :

The ivy leaves

That tap the pane are fresher than the bays  
About my brows. I would they had been sere  
Or never twinèd there ; for I have fled  
At the swift heels of steam, to seek afar  
The peace a laureate longs for when his liege  
Demands a tribute for the laurel crown.  
What doth she ask ? A song of Jaune-à-Braune !  
From the *Nineteenth Century* have I received  
Three hundred pound for less. Albeit, here goes.

## JAUNE-A-BRAUNE.

No little Lilliputian courtier he,  
Nor stick in waiting, white nor black nor gold—  
A great and granite-headed Norlander,  
A Cerberus with all his heads in one,  
A lord of lackeys, yet the awe of lords,  
A man of title, Jaune-à-Braune, Esquire !  
He oped the doors of Pullman carriages,

And no man shut but he—a chieftain eke  
Of kilt and philibeg, in whom the clan  
Is honourèd, and all the name of Braune  
Gain'd by his greatness a full inch or more ;  
Yea, all his kin attain'd to affluence  
Or bailiffdom at least.

He, though no more, .  
Much monumented, church and high hill-cairn  
Proclaim his praise, and the insignia  
Of a new order, call'd of Jaune-à-Braune,  
With motto "*Honi soi.*"

"A letter for you, sir—  
Upon the service of her Majesty !"  
What meaneth this ? Ah, 'tis that very crown  
I placed to usury i' the post-office  
Ere yet I left Southampton—the receipt  
Come in due course.

Lo, what is this I see—  
HER MAJESTY COMMANDS, and that weird name  
Thereafter, *Jaune-à-Braune.*

O for a lodge  
In some vast wilderness or Currie's ship  
With Gladstone—*Gladstone !* By the rood !  
A great thought strikes along my pen,  
And brazens all my cheek. I know the man,  
With hearty right good will, he'll turn into  
Italian the song that doth begin  
About the body of Jaune Braune, that lies

And moulders i' the dust ! He'll do it, 'twixt  
The empire and the axe !

Alfred the Great,  
Thyself applauds thee—this is more  
Than all poetic fame, though maybe not  
Quite so remunerative. Haste, then, to catch  
The London mail—not the quaint four-in-hand  
That once I saw, three piebalds and a roan ;  
But wheezy engine dragging snuff-boxes.  
Gladstone, I greet thee !

I'll not miss that train !

## THE MAN WHO LAUGHED NO MORE.

*A Neo-archaic Tale.*

## ARGUMENT.

A certain poet, who also made much goodly house-gear, as he passed by the way was met by a company of dolorous men. They beseech him to have himself ware of a hoary man who should meet him, and entice him to climb with him certain very high hills that were in that country.

But he made naught of their entreaties and would not be dissuaded, and so it happed that he learned their secret to his own cost and discomfiture soon thereafter.

Now when the hottest of the season came,  
A poet of an ancient Cymric name  
Did pass this way and in this house abode.  
But as he pondered on the wierdsome road  
Of loss and gain and carven legs of chairs,  
Of culture and of cunning wall-papèrs,  
Of La Commune, with 'face all grimy-grey,  
Sudden a band of strangers stopp'd his way.  
Batter'd and sad, and ever wearily,  
They eyed his bag to see what there might be.  
"We bin no cut-purse knaves, have thou no fear,  
But for thy warning are we gathered here.

Oh, go not thither, it will work thee woe,  
For what hath thus befallen us, we know.  
By the wayside doth lurk a grey-beard man,  
To vex thee ere the threshold thou hast wan,  
And if his counsel thou do not disdain,  
Surely and soothly he will be thy bane !”

Then vanish'd they, like witches anciently  
That witch'd upon the borders of the sea.  
Now right wrong-headed was this foolish wight,  
Nor feared he wizardry in broad daylight ;  
Yet when an olden reverend man he met,  
He reck'd not of their idle words, but let  
The old man lead him whithersome he would.

So hillward went he, saying it was good  
That man should be a-merry, therefore he  
Would cheer his doleful heart right wondrously,  
With antique stories, quaint and strange and true,  
And ancient quips the wise mound-builders knew.  
So all that day, he murmured ceaselessly,  
And the wind fell upon the Anglian Sea,  
And still the stream flow'd on. The new sun rose  
Upon a man grown grey with many woes.

Then knew he all the wisdom of the men,  
And all their secret had he in his ken.

After these days, he wandered to this inn,  
A broken man, with cheeks grown wondrous thin.  
Yea, I that write these grievous things am he  
Who goes to join that grey-beard company.

## LILITH.

## SONNET CL.

*To the Earthly Paradise Maker.*

How far away from here is Willow-wood ?  
How long since Adam's garden wanted Eve,  
And Lilith queen'd it—subtle to deceive—  
Cunning to snatch the auriole from Good ?

Yea, hers and his dwelt deep in Willow-wood,  
While Lilith wrought her vengeance to achieve—  
In barge of Willow-wood the land they leave,  
And on these Cymric hills escape the flood.

Ah, wellaway ! among that ancient race  
Sitteth the Master, pale and marvelling,  
And maidens, wondrous-throated, watch his face,  
Who scarcely breathe what time he saith this thing,

“O thou my friend, that Jason's quest didst sing,  
If Lilith's kin thou art, Heaven grant thee grace !”

## THE VISION OF THE MAN ORM.

## PREFACE.

I am a mortal, and my surname Orm,  
And when I name the name of man, I mean  
Myself, the singer of the mystic glamour.  
I am THE CELT—remember that, mine host,  
In charging for my daily provender,  
Lest I rede thee the doom I visioned  
E'en for the man accurst !  
I am the Personal in Poetry,  
In me the blood of all the races blend—  
A prophet, with the spirit of the times ;  
A man of many moods, in which I scorn  
The full assembly of the gods—Brahma,  
Osiris, Apis, and Beëlzebub,  
Balder and Brigham Young, Allah and Thor !  
So friends, avoid me when the fury teareth,  
And quickly seek the pavement opposite.

## THE POEM.

I am old, methought,  
As the world's day closes,  
A people anger-wrought  
Far and near have sought  
Me, the Celtic Moses.

For I must admit  
That my Highland people,  
Men of little wit,  
*Might* in frantic fit  
Swing me from the steeple.

[This from the mystic mad poetic brain,  
To show its mastery of the bounding rime.]

## EPILOGUE TO POEM.

How shall I liberate mine Ancient Clan,  
Clamp'd in the iron fetters of their creeds,  
Who care for Sabbath desecration,  
And regulating traffic on that day,  
More than the poet's realistic vague !  
Who doubt the singer's sprouting pinions—  
Yea, hint at cloven foot and forked tail  
Under the boot and coat immaculate.

Ah well ! I pardon them ; they will not read  
The hundred prefaces and epilogues  
In which I body forth my THEORY,

Nor buy my novels ; when they name my plays  
They spit like blank phantasmic toads—  
And shriek !!

ENVOI TO EPILOGUE.

And so in lieu of minted Mammon meanness  
I offer to my brother Cymric Celt  
These awful visions of the man Buchanan.

## FROM PHILIP DRUNK TO PHILIP SOBER.

By PHILIP I.

## I.

From the depth and the dark of the dim city closes,  
And the publishing houses that sprinkle the Strand,  
I have come to a land where a poet composes,  
And in infinite series his volumes expand.  
From Faustine and Felise, and from Fragioletto,  
From the vine-wreath'd cup in the banqueting hall,  
Though I promised to Chatto to write a libretto,  
Grey spirit of Snowdon, I come at thy call.

TRANSLATION BY PHILIP II.

*Feeling seedy,  
Looking queer,  
Rather needy,  
Drifted here.*

## II.

Lo, I stand at thy base, 'mid the mists that environ,  
While shadows cerulean are gambolling round ;  
I'm not very clear, for the earth seems of iron,  
As it rises aloft and caresses my crown.  
Like a helmless bark whose ways are uncertain,  
Whose captain lists for a God's glad word ;  
I wrap me around in the red window curtain,  
And hearken the voice of a songless bird.

## TRANSLATION.

*Good Scots' whiskey  
Makes one see  
Demons frisky,  
Frequently.*

## III.

In the dimness and depth of Night's tremulous shadow,  
I gaze on a sight that the sun hath not seen,  
The far drifted blooms of the star-sown meadow,  
And their glamorous grey efflorescence of sheen.  
They shine on the slopes like Spanish flies glimmering,  
That blister the throat of my Lady of Pain,  
Or poultice of herbs of the Orient simmering  
That clings to it softly and heals it again.

## TRANSLATION.

*Standing nightly  
On the road,  
Mellow slightly,  
Things look odd.*

## IV.

Like a fiery eye in the gloom set a-smoulder,  
Overfrown'd by the brow of the imminent eaves,  
The light of the inn makes the darkness seem colder,  
And enhances the glamour my poet-heart weaves.  
But a voice from the midst of the Pleiades seven,  
Or mayhap from the Inn 'twas Ap Owen that cried,  
"You had better be quick, for we shut at eleven,  
Unless you're determin'd to slumber outside!"

## TRANSLATION.

*Poem sprouteth  
In my head;  
Landlord shouteth,  
"Come to bed!"*

END OF "HARRY OWEN'S BOOK."

## LOVE AND NATURE.

---

### GREETING.

(WRITTEN ON GOATFELL, ARRAN, EARLY MORNING.)

IN morning's clear dispersèd light thy peak  
Draws me aloft, O Mountain of the Wind ;  
The girdling pasture-lands I leave behind,  
'Twixt Cyclopean walls my way I seek,

The strength of strongest hills, albeit weak  
The elemental forces to withstand.  
Within the mighty hollow of thy hand  
Thou holdest me ; awe keepeth my soul meek.

And yet my heart is at thy seaward base—  
One house is more than all thy majesty,  
One maiden more than suns that ever were

In morning lands or on thy mountain ways—  
Yearneth my heart as yearneth for the sea  
The tumbling waters of thy White Water.

1883.

LOVE AND NATURE.

I.

On this smooth steep of grey and parchèd grass  
 Stretch'd out I lie, and all the Lothian plain,  
 Barrier'd by hills, beneath mine eye doth pass,  
 Even from our citadel to where the rain

Swoops from the cloud on the low Lammermoors—  
 But what boots all this wealth of summer sweets,  
 This width of plough-land, Pentland's large contours,  
 When a dull inward sense of loss defeats

The beauty and the wisdom, and all meaning steals  
 From what a week ago was laden with it?  
 Ah, sweet! those eyes of thine are more to me

Than all the Gilead-balm that nature deals;  
 Better by thy sweet side an hour to sit  
 Than all the beauty of the world to see!

## II.

And thou?—what dost *thou* do? Sitt'st thou apart  
Under the hawthorn tree? or here and there dost go,  
Ordering all things with daintiest art?  
But whatsoe'er she doth, right well I know

My love hath thought for me, forgetteth not  
Aught that hath happ'd between us twain.  
Her eyes may rest on southern garden plot,  
Yet in them is a yearning and a pain;

And she had liefer see a sterner land,  
And basalt-bastion'd hills and greyer fields,  
Than bide alone so long and hide her heart.

Love, true and tender, reach me here thine hand;  
Think, sweet, how much of hope the Future yields,  
When Fate shall not for always say "Apart!"

## MEMORY AND HOPE.

OUT of the clinging valley mists I stray  
Into the summer midnight clear and still,  
And which the brighter is no man may say—  
Whether the gold beyond the western hill

Where late the sun went down, or the faint tinge  
Of lucent green, like sea wave's inner curve  
Just ere it breaks, that gleams behind the fringe  
Of eastern coast. So which doth most preserve

My wistful soul in hope and steadfastness  
I know not—all that golden-memored past  
So sudden wonderful, when new life ran

First in my veins ; or that clear hope, no less  
Orient within me, for whose sake I cast  
All meaner ends into these ground mists wan.

## PRESENCE IN ABSENCE.

THE mists lie in the hollows of the hills,  
In wreaths festoon the ridges ; but the heights  
Are clear and bare—a few blurred lights  
Gleam yellow from below ; but starlight fills

The lucid vault of night ; the air is sweet,  
And the far Pentland range is not less clear  
Though darker than by day—distinct and near  
The crags arise of Arthur's royal seat—

But whose dear hand is this that guideth me ?  
What subtle dainty pressure thrilleth all  
My lonely life ? Who leads me by the way

That overclimbs the mist, and makes me see  
Where Purity abides, whate'er befall  
My mist-environ'd life by night or day.

## LOVE'S FINAL CAUSE.

WHAT is it that I love ? The tender glow,  
And faint half-shadows on thy golden hair ?  
Thine eyes as clear as summer morning air ?  
Yea, these—yet not for these alone I love thee so.

Is it that rest and solace go with thee ?  
That all my happinesses in thee dwell ?  
Is it for these I love thee passing well ?  
Yea, dearest—but the springs yet deeper flow—

Ask some vext trader far on Indian seas  
Why he runs races with the hurricanes,  
Or floating weed, tide-driven out from land,

Why it returns not shoreward with the breeze.  
Love hath no law—it comes and it remains ;  
Yea, stays for ever, daring all command.

TO THE AUTHOR OF "OLRIG GRANGE."

My friend, to thee from out the silent ranks  
Of those thou knowest not, who yet give thanks

For all they owe thy mellow thoughtfulness,  
I send a brother's greeting—for no less

We in the turmoil love thy fearless truth,  
And ever youthful sympathy with youth,

Than they who daily know thy kindly voice,  
And quiet shepherding 'mid city noise.

No Jack-o'-Lantern glimmer lights thy book,  
No moth burns here the fringes of her wing,

Nor gleams thy torch o'er any carnival,  
But broad sunshine, which foul things may not brook,

Yet men may work by, till the hours do bring,  
After the noon, the mists of evenfall.

1881.

THE LADY BEATRICE.

My love is like that lady Beatrice

Who held great Dante's heart, whose beauty grew  
So marvellous to his thought, that he would do  
All things to give his wistful longing ease—

To touch her hand would overpass the seas,  
To do her will would into exile go,  
Or in the dust a city's headship throw,  
If so his well-belovèd lady please.

So loved art thou, Queen Soul, that sitt'st above  
These turmoils in the whirling straits of life,  
Reaching a steady hand to stay thy love,  
Vext with the waters, weary of the strife—

Whose feeblest songs of thee impart him peace  
Like Dante's when he sang of Beatrice.

1883.

## THE FOOTPRINTS OF THE GOTH.

RHIADYR-Y-WENNOL, CAERNARVONSHIRE.

THE Vandal and the Visigoth come here,  
The trampler under foot, and he whose eyes,  
Unblest, behold not where the glory lies ;  
The wallower in mire, whose sidelong leer

Degrades the wholesome earth—these all come near  
To gaze upon the wonder of the hills,  
And drink the limpid clearness of the rills.  
Yet each returns to what he holds most dear,

To change the script and grind the mammon mills  
Unpurified ; for what men hither bring,  
That take they hence, and Nature doth appear

One that doth spend herself for sodden wills,  
That pearls of price before the swine doth fling,  
And from the shrine casts out the sacred gear

## FOR MY MOTHER.

HARD is it, O my friends, to gather up  
A whole life's goodness into narrow space—  
A life made Heaven-meet by patient grace,  
And handling oft the sacramental cup

Of sorrow, drinking all the bitter drains.  
Her life she kept most sacred from the world ;  
Though Martha-wise, much cumber'd and imperill'd  
With service, Mary-like she brought her pains,

And laid them and herself low at the feet,  
The travel-weary, deep-scarr'd feet, of Him  
The incarnate Good, who oft in Galilee

Had borne Himself the burden and the heat—  
Ah ! couldst thou hear, thy tender eyes were dim  
With humble tears to think this meant for thee !

## CARPE DIEM.

I SAW two lovers on a day of days,  
A day of winds spray-tossing, and the swift  
Glad interchange of shine and shade, the drift  
Of Atlantean clouds, the heavens that raise

On their white shoulders ; round them the mid-noon  
Pulsed warmly with the sense of summer air,  
A far thing seem'd the weight of winter care,  
And the "Asunder," coming all too soon.

Then my sad heart did say, "Lo, this is well ;  
Take they their fill of love and joy to-day,  
To-morrow, and the next day ; ere the shears

Of Atropos divide them, do thou tell  
Those twain their hearts to strengthen while they may,  
And so stand firm through all the lonely years.

# THE LIFTING OF THE VEIL.

IN the still dewy morn of Western Isles,  
 Up some lone loch far in the Hebrides,  
 I hear among the heath the honey bees,  
 And the long level lake in sunshine smiles :

I round the cliff, a roaring in mine ears—  
 For miles and miles the grey Atlantic booms,  
 As down the coast the breaker surging comes  
 Whitecrested, like a rush of mountaineers.

So too, a youth, whose feet in quiet ways  
 Have gone through all his years, exploring bold  
 By speculation's vast and trackless sea,

Finds realms undreamt of in his careless days  
 Flash on his sight—at noon the copestone rolled  
 From whited sepulchres' hypocrisy.

## THE WEB OF LIFE.

## I.

IN the cool precinct of a quiet room,  
Lit by the glory of the northern eves,  
Her web of life a maiden sits and weaves—  
Gold web of pleasure, purple fringe of gloom.

Some after-rose of the late sunset's bloom  
Cleaves to her cheek and robing virginal,  
And softly round about her feet doth fall  
The cloth of gold she weaveth on her loom,

As through and through the steadfast weft of love  
She drives the shining thread of memories—  
Here fashioning a waste of waves—above,  
Two hands that clasp a golden Fleur-de-lis ;  
And higher, ONE, whose emblem is the dove,  
Broodeth for always over the grey seas.

II.

Far sever'd from the first by measured miles,  
 Another web is woven and other hands  
 Ply the swift shuttle, guide the shining strands  
 To form that strange compound of tears and smiles,

Glad hearted laughter, dear delicious wiles  
 That make the mantle of Love's hidden form,  
 And interwoven arms more close and warm  
 Because the earth is chilly and the aisles

Of Life's high temple, builded all of stone,  
 Too unresponsive to humanity  
 For man or maid to dwell in all alone.  
 So grows on each the pattern we shall see  
 One day by Love's hands round our shoulders drawn—  
 A wedding garment fit for thee and me.

1884.

## SPRING YEARNING.

TO R. W.

New lands, strange faces, all the summer days  
My weary feet have trod, mine eyes have seen ;  
Among the snows all winter have I been,  
Rare Alpine air, and white untrodden ways.

From the great Valais mountain peaks my gaze  
Hath seen the cross on Monte Viso plain,  
Seen blue Maggiore grey with driving rain,  
And white cathedral spires like flames of praise.

Yet now the spring is here, who doth not sigh  
For showery morns, and grey skies sudden bright,  
And a dear land a-dream with shifting light !  
Or in what clear-skied realm doth ever lie,

Such glory as of gorse on Scottish braes,  
Or the white hawthorn of these English Mays ?

1885.

## HOPE DEFERRED.

BARE is the waste sea-margin in the dawn,  
Barren the baffled ebbing of the tide,  
Grey tracks of shingle, miles on either side ;  
Here is no trace of any work of man,

Above and underfoot God's perfect plan,  
Unbounded, vast, and fill'd with loneliness—  
Swift race of breakers, ranks of cloud that press  
Hard in the breeze's wake, whose rare draught ran

Clear through my heart and cool'd its burning thirst.

Here o'er and o'er I conn'd this barren lore :  
“ *Than Hope deferr'd, better Hope lost at first.*”

Until upon the barren salt sea-shore,

Forsaken by the ebb's forlorn regress,  
I wept for love and utter loneliness.

## ANCHORA FIDEI.

WHEN from the depths of an unclouded sky  
The thunderbolt doth fall, or earthquake waves  
Threaten the sleeping city, he who saves  
His sacredest possession, doth not cry

With bootless wailing, or inactive lie  
Waiting the crash of doom. Nay, he doth face  
The terror of great darkness, firmly brace  
His feet against some bar of faith, or try

Which bands are iron, which of twisted straw ;  
And most rejoic'd is he, who then hath found  
The one sure band that may not broken be,

That in the tempest Faith doth closer draw  
Until her arms engird his body round,  
And bring his soul in safety through the sea.

## LOVE IN A WORLD OF SNOW.

On either side the great and still ice sea  
Are compassing snow mountains near and far ;  
While dominant Schreckhorn and Finsteraar  
Hold their grim peaks aloft defiantly.

Blind with excess of light and glory, we,  
Above whose heads in hottest mid-day glare  
The Schreckhorn and his sons arise in air,  
Sink in the weary snowfields to the knee ;

Then, resting after peril pass'd in haste,  
I saw, from our rock-shelter'd vantage ledge,  
In the white fervent heat sole shadowy spot,

Familiar eyes that smiled amid the waste—  
Lo ! in the sparse snow at the glacier edge,  
The small blue flower we call Forget-me-not !

## PRO FANO.

HAIL, World-adored ! to thee three times all hail !  
We at thy mighty shrine, profane, obscure,  
With clenched hands beat at thy cruel door.  
O hear, awake, and let us in, O Baal !

Low at thy brazen gates ourselves we fling—  
Hear us, ev'n us, thy bondmen firm and sure,  
Our thoughts, our souls, our very God abjure !  
Art thou asleep, or dead, or journeying ?

Hear us, O Ashtoreth, O Baal, that we  
In mystic mazes may a moment gleam,  
May touch and twine with hot hearts pulsing free  
Among thy groves by the Orontes stream.

Open and make us, ere our sick hearts fail,  
Hewers of wood within thy courts, O Baal !

December, 1885.

## A CREED FOR MEN—OR DEVILS?

“BEHOLD the Final Truth of cosmic things !  
 All is unreal, all the shifting play  
 Of lights that gild a horror of decay—  
 A gold dome charnelling worm-eaten kings.

No truth in God—or is there any God?  
 The *universe*, dead matter, working by  
 Some hidden yeast of inward energy ;  
*Mind*, but mere brain-cell, good to feed the sod ;

No whence or whither, just a Nothing thrown  
 In th' empty space betwixt two Nothingnesses.  
 But live—live on, O men ; be loath to end

This vegetable life ! You'll not be mown  
 This sickle sweep ; so kiss the heel that presses,  
 And bless your gods for these good gifts they send ! ”

## A VOICE CRYING.

WHO calls it harm to play this pleasant game,  
Or Folly's ball to toss from hand to hand ?

And, while the feet are light, why should one stand  
Out in the corridor among the lame ?

Nay, entering rather, hearken the acclaim  
That is our welcome to the lightsome band,  
Who whirl so swiftly through Queen Pleasure's land,  
Whom Thought may not annoy, nor Conscience blame.

Shut out the stars and the fair universe—  
Shut out the silent spaces of the wood ;  
Let not that wild wail from the darkness pierce

The graceful lightness of our airy mood—  
*" Ah, had I known, when just as gay was I,  
That in the waste, untended, I should lie ! "*

## TIME'S NEMESIS.

Ho, let the viol's pleasing swifter grow—  
Let Music's madness fascinate the will,  
And all Youth's pulses with the ardour thrill !  
Hast thou, Old Time, e'er seen so brave a show ?

Did not the dotard smile as he said "*No ?*"  
Pshaw ! hang the grey-beard—let him prate his fill ;  
Men are but dolts who talk of Good and Ill.  
*These grapes of ours are wondrous sour, I trow !*

They sneer because we joy in other things,  
And think they know THE GOOD. I tell the fools  
*We* have the pleasure—*WE ! Our* master flings  
Full-measured bliss to all the folk he rules,

Nor asks he aught for quit-rent, fee, or tithe—  
*Ho, Bald-head, wherefore sharpenest thy scythe ?*

TO JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER,  
THE FRIEND—MY FRIEND.

NORTH of the North Cape I remember thee,  
Brave Quaker poet of the New World North !  
To thee, my friend, in silence goeth forth  
Into the keen air of this Arctic sea,

Greeting and filial reverence heartily.  
As when in shade of gardens summer-leaved  
Thy first grave benediction I received,  
Or when in towerèd town more dear to me

Thou bad'st me God-speed in the young man's race,  
I am thy liegeman still, and humbly kneel  
Between thy scarrèd hands to lay my face—  
Desiring most thy pure heart fire to steal,  
A double portion of thy spirit's grace,  
And ardour for an equal Commonweal.

1885.

MARIE.

(FROM ALFRED DE MUSSET'S "POÉSIES NOUVELLES.")

I.

As from spring buds in woodlands  
Break mystical smiles,  
At the breathing of warm airs  
From westerly isles ;

II.

As their stems, fresh and tender,  
Shake with joy and desire,  
From their roots in earth's bosom  
To their cups full of fire ;

III.

So soareth my love's song  
As upward it goes  
When she stirreth to music  
A mouth like a rose

## IV.

And her lover stands listening  
How thrillingly true,  
Rings the voice that is hovering  
Far up in the blue.

1885.

### BIRTHDAY BLESSING.

BE brave and true to God alone,  
And without fear  
Do thou rejoice to enter on  
Another year.

Each spring the trees are fresh and green ;  
The springing flowers  
In fair fresh dress each year are seen  
In thy still bowers.

So keep thy maiden heart as bright ;  
Each year renew  
Thy soul's apparel of delight  
In all things true ;

And long ere winter's twilight falls  
With chill and damp,  
And at the door the Bridegroom calls,  
Trim thou thy lamp.

## LISA OF THE HILL.

INTO the hotter sun  
Out of the old stone wall,  
Lithe lizards flash and run  
And slow soft blind-worms crawl.

Lisa among the leaves,  
Under her hat's brown brim,  
A web of fancy weaves,  
What she shall say to him—

How she shall bid him go  
To Netta of the Mill,  
And no more trouble know  
Through Lisa of the Hill.

All in the cloudless glow  
    Lisa doth dress the vines ;  
Yet Lisa's self doth go  
    Among the shady pines.

Along their forest tracks  
    Her heart flits on the wing,  
Round where she hears the axe  
    Of woodman Petro ring—

Petro, whose sunburnt face  
    And sunny Lombard curls,  
Whose open forest ways,  
    Are lov'd of Lombard girls.

Boldly will Lisa say  
    To Petro words severe ;  
Petro shall turn away,  
    In wondering and in fear.

But, swiftly driven apart,  
    Just then the leaves divide,  
And Lisa with a start  
    Turneth her head aside.

And lo, two hands are laid  
    Upon her shoulders so,  
That 'neath the vine-leaves' shade  
    Hotly her cheek doth glow :

And though a stalwart arm  
    Somehow is round her waist,  
Lisa takes no alarm,  
    Nor shows a sign of haste.

She goes an inch more near,  
    And, speaking somewhat low,  
She saith her words severe  
    And biddeth him to go.

But he who comes to stay  
    Turns not so quick again,  
So all the summer day  
    Netta may watch in vain.

And Petro needs not fear ;  
    For, turning up her head,  
Something much less severe  
    Her tell-tale eyes have said ;

When he, through broad green leaves  
    Moves as to go away,  
He sees a face that grieves,  
    Two lips that murmur "Stay !"

Then dainty finger-tips  
    Make for his eyes a hood,  
The while her daintier lips  
    Behave as red lips should.

Ah, Netta of the Mill,  
Long mayst thou lonely brood,  
With Lisa of the Hill  
Stays Petro of the Wood.

1885.

## ASCRPTION

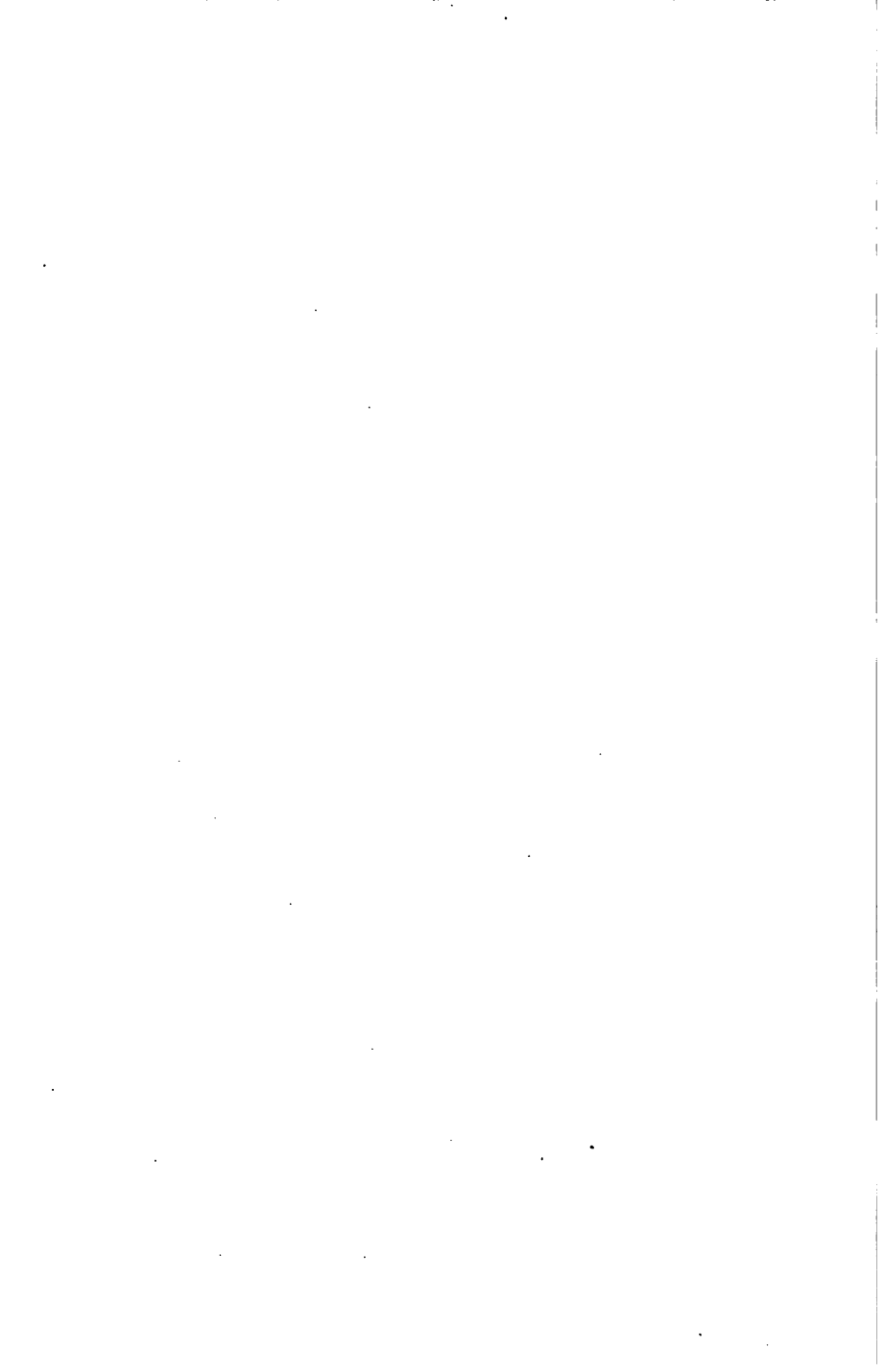
*With Aldrich's "Queen of Sheba" and with  
"Dulce Cor."*

UNTO another Ruth,  
Not woo'd 'neath Savoy pine,  
Fair in her queenly youth,  
Not Sheba's queen, but mine.

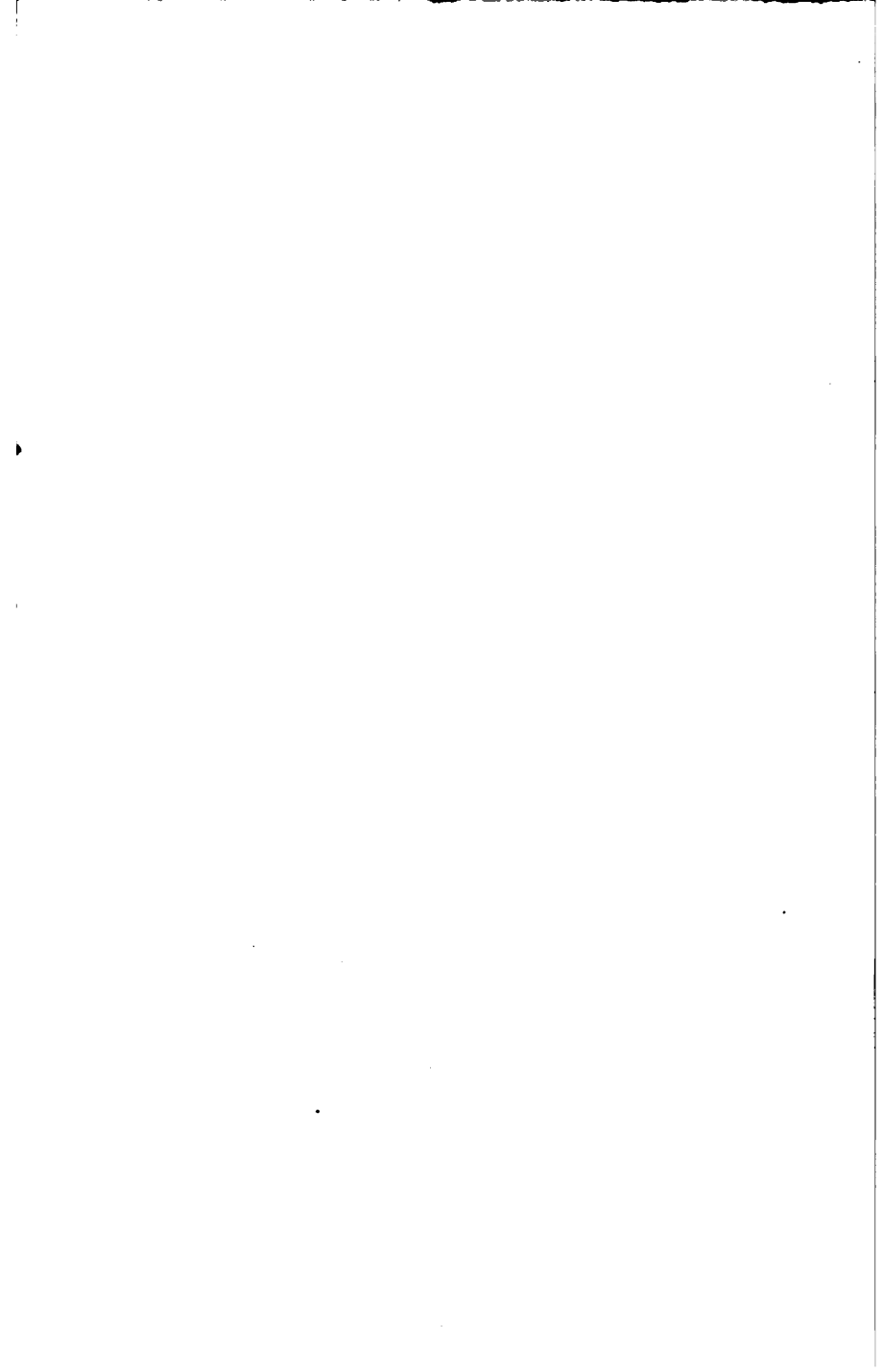
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